

**'To Raise the Banner in the Remote North' ; Politics
in County Monaghan, 1868-1883.**

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis has been composed entirely
by myself and is my own work.

Christopher D. McGimpsey.

This study examines the evolution of the political process in the Ulster county of Monaghan during the period 1868-1883. Considerable attention has been given to the social, economic and geographic features from the end of the sixteenth century. In addition, a survey of the parliamentary representation of Monaghan from the Act of Union to the general election of 1865 has been undertaken. This extended treatment of the socio-economic and political background is regarded as essential to a clear appreciation of political behaviour at constituency level in the later nineteenth century.

The period 1865-1883 saw a most significant change in the parliamentary representation of the county. Monaghan had always been regarded as a stronghold of Irish Conservatism, albeit with occasional Whig interludes. In 1865 one of the seats was captured from the Tories by a member of the local Liberal ascendancy. Our period, then, opened with the representation of Monaghan split between the two major British parties.

The 'Disestablishment Election' of 1868 saw the Conservatives regain control of the county's second seat. Thereafter that party's hegemony was threatened first by the conservative constitutional nationalism of the Home Government Association and later, in 1880, by the Ulster Liberals. Advocating strong tenant right principles, the Liberal party nominees defeated both Conservative members. The result appeared to be a vindication of non-sectarian class politics. The key to victory had been held by a relatively small number of Liberal Presbyterian tenant farmers.

In 1883 one of the M.Ps. resigned, and the ensuing by-election pitted a local Liberal Presbyterian against a Conservative and Tim Healy, the nominee of Charles Stewart Parnell and the Irish National Party. The result saw a narrow victory for the Nationalist candidate over his Conservative counterpart with the Liberal receiving an embarrassingly small vote.

The massive decline in the Liberal vote between the contests of 1880 and 1883 looks anomalous. However, it is argued here that the 1880 result reflected an anti-Conservative rather than a pro-Liberal vote on the part of the Catholics. In other words, the sectarian nature of politics in Monaghan which had been such a prominent feature of the county had not been interrupted.

The thesis narrates the story of Irish politics during this most formative period, and relates it to a local study. By so

doing it illustrates the strongly sectarian dimension to Irish politics. In the late nineteenth century few, if any, public issues could be fully divorced from the religious factor. The rhetorical expression of political ideals might appear non-sectarian at Westminster, but in the Monaghan region their true nature was indicated by the manner in which the population reacted to them. Thus the real significance of the political activities of the representatives of the two traditions can often be more fully appreciated when related to constituency level.

Monaghan occupied a peripheral position on the borders of Ulster. Its population was around 75% Catholic during the second half of the nineteenth century. This means that Monaghan offers an illuminating example of the interaction of Protestant Ulster and Catholic Ireland. The activities of the county's Protestant and Catholic populations, its Orangemen and its Fenians, its various groups of clergy, its Protestant landlords and its Catholic Bishop, all constituted the political life of 'the county of the little hills'.

Today Monaghan's geographic position places it in the front line of an assault upon Northern Ireland. Once again the people of the county are strategically placed in relation to national and sectarian confrontations on the island - plus ça change plus la reste meme.

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CHAPTER I

Social and Economic Background

The county of Monaghan was not to come into being until after 1585 when the then English monarch, Elizabeth I, requested that the 'unreformed parts of Ulster' be divided into shires. However, the area was to remain outside the effective influence of Dublin administrative procedures until early in the seventeenth century. It was always a disputed territory within the island and enjoyed border status as the boundary of Ulster moved first in a southerly and then in a northerly direction. The irony of the Northern Ireland border, which today severs Monaghan along with Cavan and Donegal from the provincial whole of which it is a constituent part, is but another example of the way in which the county has been a prime area for expansionism where north meets south.

The centre of the county of Monaghan lies approximately sixty miles from Belfast and eighty miles from Dublin. In all, it covers four hundred and ninety-eight square miles. Sometimes described as 'The county of the little hills,' it is at the centre of Ireland's drumlin drift belt,¹ which stretches from Craigantlet, south of Belfast lough, in a long arc through Armagh, across Monaghan and into east Cavan. As is usual with central drumlin areas, the county also has a large number of small lakes.²

In many ways Monaghan encapsulates much of the problem of twentieth century Ireland. Although unquestionably an Ulster county, it is

1 See T W Freeman, Ireland, Its Physical, Historical, Social and Economic Geography, (London, 1950), pp 460-468.

2 See Fig 1.1, Relief and Drainage Map of the north of Ireland.

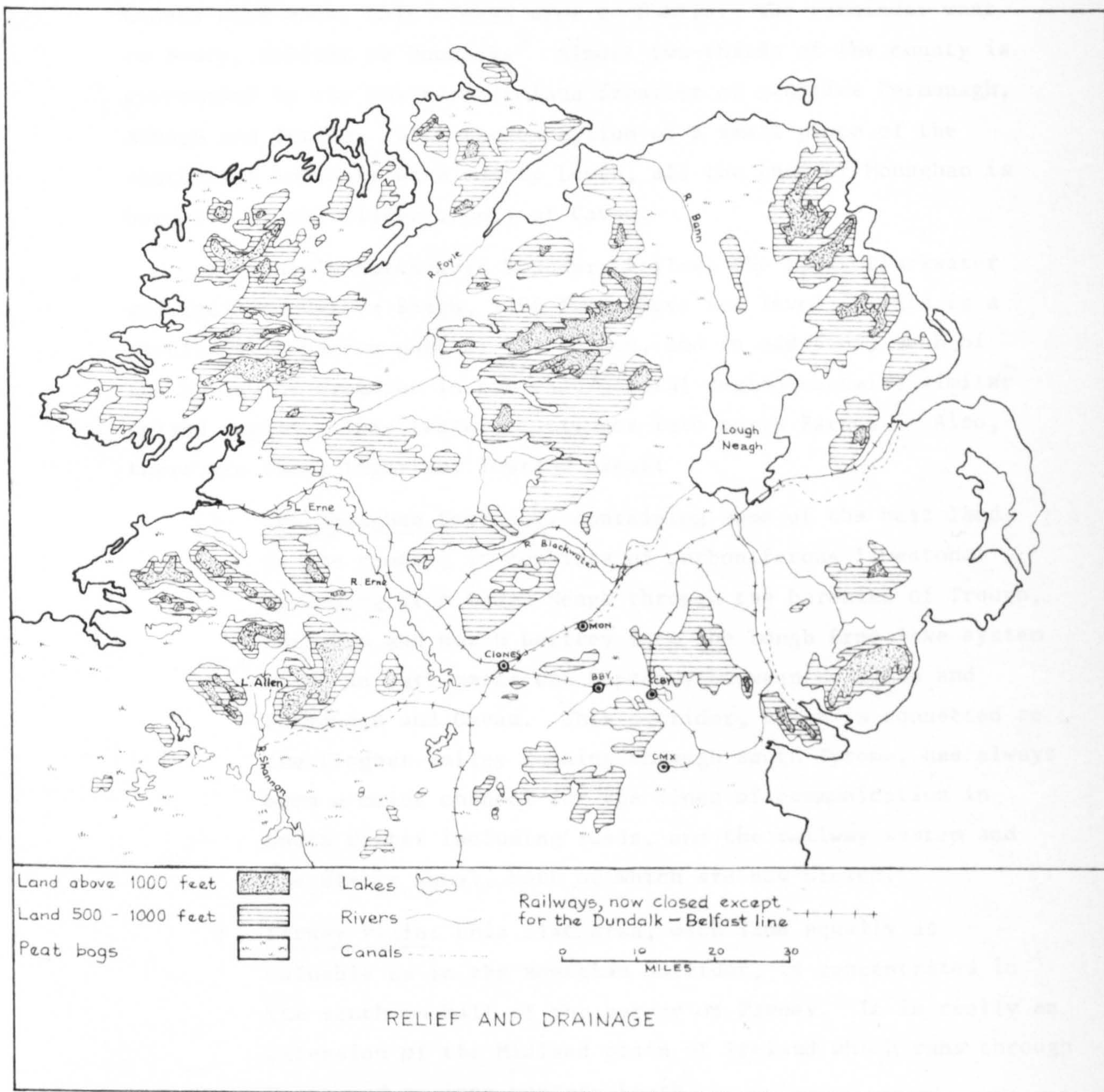


Fig. 1.1

RELIEF AND DRAINAGE MAP OF THE NORTH OF IRELAND

Source :- Duffy, Landholding in Co. Monaghan. Fig 1.2

overwhelmingly Catholic, and is today a part of the Republic of Ireland. Yet it is closer to Belfast than Dublin, and its major lines of communication have historically lain on an east/west axis into counties Armagh and Fermanagh. For example, in pre-railway times out of one hundred and forty-nine carts that left Clones each week, only eleven went to Dublin. The remainder went to Newry, Belfast or Dundalk.³ Almost two-thirds of the county is surrounded by the Northern Ireland frontier of counties Fermanagh, Armagh and Tyrone. With the exception of a small piece of the south-east boundary with county Louth, all the rest of Monaghan is bordered by the Ulster county of Cavan.

Monaghan's north-west boundary follows the river Blackwater and includes Slieve Beagh, 1196 feet above sea level.⁴ This is a particularly barren part of the county, and in addition, much of the barony of Cremorne in the east/central region contains similar upland region. This feature continues into north Farney.⁵ Also, there are three important lowland areas:

- 1 The Monaghan Corridor: containing some of the best land in the county, it consists of carboniferous limestone extending from Lough Neagh through the baronies of Trough, Monaghan and north Dartrey into the Lough Erne lake system which in part marks the boundary between Monaghan and Fermanagh and Cavan. This corridor, which is connected to the Clogher Valley running through south Tyrone, has always been a major channel for the lines of communication in south Ulster including roads, and the railway system and the Ulster Canal, both of which are now Closed.
- 2 Farney Plain: this flat area, with land equally as valuable as in the Monaghan corridor, is concentrated in the southern half of the barony of Farney. It is really an extension of the Midland plain of Ireland which runs through Meath and on into western Louth.

3 Rev J Gilsenan, The Parish of Killeevan, Clogher Record, Vol IV, No 1, (1960-1961), p 22.

4 Robert Lloyd Praeger, The Way That I Went: An Irishman in Ireland, (Dublin, 1937), pp 131-132.

5 Parish and baronial divisions of Monaghan are indicated in Fig 1.3 facing p 10.

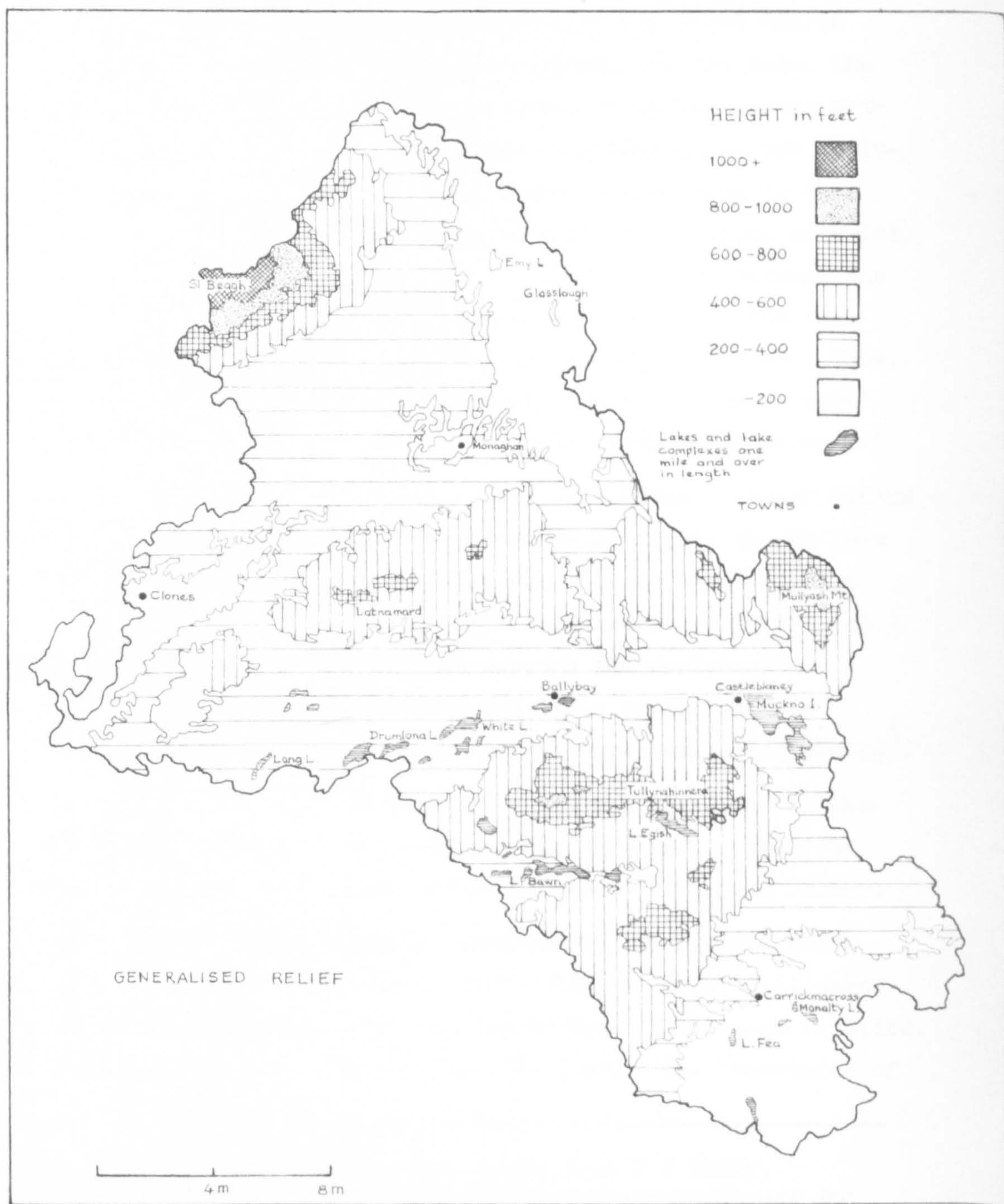


Fig. 1.2

GENERALISED RELIEF MAP OF COUNTY MONAGHAN

Source :- Duffy, Landholding in Co. Monaghan, Fig 1.3.

3 Newbliss/Castleblayney: a third lowland area, not as valuable farming land as the other two flat areas, it traverses the southern part of the county⁶.

THE EMERGENCE OF MONAGHAN

The fourteenth century saw the gradual decline of the English colony in Ireland and the subsequent resurgence of the older Gaelic families. That part of the county which was closest to the Pale, the barony of Farney, in the south-east, was an area which alternated between Gaelic and English control. It had been confiscated by the Anglo-Normans during the twelfth century and then been leased back to the Gaelic chiefs. However, within two hundred years the McMahons of Oriel had reclaimed control of it. It then became a buffer zone between the English Pale which stretched into present day county Louth, and the O'Neills of Tyrone who controlled the frontier of Gaelic Ulster. Thus, by the end of the sixteenth century, "Monaghan and south Armagh comprised a definite frontier part of the formidable Ulster borderlands."⁷

The eventual emergence of Dublin's power as supreme in south Ulster was reflected in the 1591 Settlement when the local Gaelic chiefs gave up their ancient title to the land and had it returned to them under English law. The basic difference was that the concept of individual possession was now introduced, inherited through the custom of primogeniture, and the McMahonship (the acceptance by the various branches of the clan of the pre-eminence of one sept) was discontinued⁸.

The more contentious area of Farney was already nominally in the hands of an English grantee since 1576, the Earl of Essex. The 1591 Settlement only expanded the process which had been started in Farney.

Subsequent war in Ulster somewhat retarded the advantages which might have accrued from the settlement, but a further legal settlement of the county in 1606 re-granted the 1591 lands back to the same families. The lands remained in Irish hands for the most part. The importance of

6 Much of the geographic account is taken from P J Duffy, Population and Landholding in County Monaghan: A Study in Change and Continuity, Unpublished Ph D dissertation, (U C D 1976).

7 Ibid p 41.

8 Material for the discussion of pre 1641 Monaghan has come primarily from Duffy and from P Livingston The Monaghan Story (Enniskillen, 1980), Chs 6-9.

the 1591 settlement was that it

. . . signified, firstly, the priority which the English administration attached to this South Ulster region and, secondly, it represented a logical extension of English policy of removing native titles and transforming native landholding structures, and thirdly, it is significant because of its implications for the later settlement of Ulster.

Another aspect of this settlement which deserved note was the fact that church lands were granted to English settlers. They in turn were expected to build castles on their lands within five years. The turmoil which Ulster experienced in the 1590s (especially south Ulster) meant that this was rarely fulfilled, but it was the first placement of Englishmen in Monaghan outside of the barony of Farney. This small beginning, (it involved only ten English grantees),¹⁰ was a prologue to the latter large scale plantation of Ulster by James I. And whereas Monaghan was not planted, the placement of some Protestant speculators upon old church land was the nucleus of the Protestant community in the county.

The period from the reconfirmation of the 1591 settlement, 1606-1640, saw a gradual break-up of the larger Irish estates. There was an early fragmentation of the Gaelic holdings. This was particularly true in the baronies of Trough, Monaghan and Dartrey.¹¹ And the settling of English speculators upon the land also had the effect of increasing the number of subtenants from outside who were attracted to the county. An indication of this process is the large number of British names contained in the Depositions of 1641 which were taken after the Irish rebellion. Once again these were concentrated in the east and central region, especially around Monaghan, Donagh and Tehallen parishes, with a further concentration around Clones town in the west of the county.

A notion of the extent of planter settlement in county Monaghan can be gleaned from the 1659 'Census' of the county which was undertaken

9 Duffy, Landholding in County Monaghan, p 43.

10 The size of the English settlement is irrelevant. It indicated to Britain the efficacy of imposing English legal tenure upon the Irish chiefs, and was the logical extension of the 1591 settlement. It also suggests the significance which England placed upon this south Ulster area.

11 Duffy, Landholding in County Monaghan, p 57. See also his 'Patterns of Landownership in Gaelic Monaghan in the Late Seventeenth Century,' Clogher Record, Vol X, No 3, (1981), pp 304-322.

in conjunction with Sir William Petty's Survey. Although it claims to record people, it must, in fact, be a total of households.

Table 1.1: The 1659 'Census' of County Monaghan

<u>Parish</u>	<u>Number of People</u>	<u>English</u>	<u>Irish</u>	<u>English %</u>
Aghnamullan	230	-	230	-
Clantibred	222	-	222	-
Clownish	162	28	134	17.3
Dartrye alias Galoone ¹²	748	74	674	9.9
Donagh	352	104	248	29.5
Donomoyne	237	4	233	1.7
Enniskeene	158	4	154	2.5
Errigle	349	30	319	8.6
Kilmore	230	49	181	21.3
Macaross	304	54	250	17.8
Magherecloony	281	2	279	0.7
Monaghan	312	42	270	13.5
Teedavnet	334	43	291	12.9
Tullicabett	142	-	142	-

(Source: Duffy, Landholding in Monaghan, p 70)

This collection was taken too soon after the Cromwellian settlement to include this new phase of settlement. However, it does give an indication of the extent of Protestant population at the time of the 1641 rebellion. The term 'English' as in the Irish language, meant Protestant and may relate to Scottish or English settlers. As the census indicates, the settlement pattern had already started to emerge, with the parishes with the largest concentration of 'English' being principally in the Monaghan corridor. This represents some of the best land in the county. The only anomaly is the large number of settlers in the parish of Macaross which is situated in the barony of Farney. In the nineteenth century this area contained the smallest proportion of Protestants in the county. The number in the 1659 census may reflect English settlement

¹² The parish of Galoone covered most of present day Dartrey barony; it eventually split into the modern parishes of Ematris, Aghabog, Killeevan and Currin, and included a small part of county Fermanagh.

around the infant town of Carrickmacross. Another aspect of the census which is unusual is the very small number of English recorded in the parish of Galoone. As further discussion will indicate, this area of south Dartrey contained the largest proportion of Protestants in county Monaghan by the mid nineteenth century.

The figure for 1659 was computed too soon after the Cromwellian settlement of 1652 to take into account any further alteration in land-holding patterns in the county which resulted from it. It thus gives us only 'the state of the parties' in the period immediately prior to the Cromwellian confiscations. The Cromwellian settlement rationalised the system of land tenure still further. The need to pay officers and men with land resulted in a further influx of English and Scottish settlers. Often small grants would be bought up by individuals who would then amalgamate them into larger estate holdings. For example, the Dawson estates in county Monaghan were acquired in this way. Similarly, Anketell and Johnston of Trough, Corry of south Dartrey, and Forster of Tedavnet, north of Monaghan town, all held their lands from this period.

The Irish, for their part, did not vacate the county with the arrival of English and Scottish settlers. For part of the process which saw speculators establish family estates in the county also included the influx of poorer classes who wished to take up tenancies under the new landlords. This was a result of a process from which Monaghan was excluded. The Plantation of Ulster, the counties of Coleraine (later to be renamed Londonderry), Armagh, Tyrone, Fermanagh, Donegal and Cavan at the beginning of the seventeenth century had led to the arrival of very large numbers of landhungry settlers. They had gradually found their way into Monaghan and by the end of the 1600s the Irish were being displaced by Scots upon the better holdings, and being forced into the hills of north Dartrey, Cremorne, Farney, north-west Monaghan and Trough baronies.¹³ This second influx concentrated on the areas where Protestants were already established, Donagh, Kilmore, Tedavnet, Monaghan and Clones. This formed a distinctive belt through the Monaghan corridor.

¹³ On the Ulster Plantation see M Perceval-Maxwell, The Scottish Migration to Ulster in the Reign of James I, (London, 1973).

County Monaghan, then, while not one of the planted counties, evinced similar Protestant settlement to those areas of Ulster which were escheated. The Monaghan corridor also proved to be an obvious line of expansion and settlers quickly spilled through it from Armagh and Tyrone via the Clogher Valley. Similarly, there was an overspill of Protestants from north Armagh into central Monaghan plain, and from south Fermanagh into the Clones and Currin areas. This process has been described as 'the gradual percolation of settlers'¹⁴ through south Ulster. The influx from Clogher Valley and Fermanagh was mostly English and episcopalian, whilst that from the north Armagh uplands was mostly composed of Scottish Presbyterian stock. It was a result of the build-up of settler reserves in the already planted areas of Ulster as more and more migrants came across the sea from the mainland. This migration reached its peak in the 1690s with the Scottish famine. And any reverses which the Protestant settlement might have experienced during the Jacobite war were short-lived.¹⁵ For although Monaghan was almost denuded of its Protestant population, after the Newtownbutler and Boyne victories, Protestants again flooded into the area to take up the holdings which had been so recently relinquished.¹⁶ For example, in 1714, the Catholic Bishop of Clogher reported to Rome,

Although all Ireland is suffering, this province is worse off than the rest of the country, because of the fact that from the neighbouring country of Scotland Calvinists are coming over here daily in large groups of families, occupying the towns and parts of the country and expelling the natives . . . they enjoy the favour of the Government and they have the support of the Protestant residents . . .

17

14 See, for example, W H Crawford, 'Economy and Society in South Ulster in the Eighteenth Century, Clogher Record, Vol VIII, No 3, (1975), pp 241-258.

15 The extent of Protestant retreat in the face of the Jacobites is discussed by Pilip O'Mordha, 'Clones in the Williamite Wars, 1689-1692,' Clogher Record, Vol X, No 2, (1980), pp 258-262.

16 On the Williamite war in south Ulster see J G Simms, 'The Williamite War in South Ulster,' Clogher Record, Vol X, No 1, (1979), pp 155-161.

17 Rev P J Flanagan, 'Diocese of Clogher in 1714 - translation of a report by Most Rev Hugh McMahon,' ibid, Vol I, No 2, (1954), p 40.

It was during the eighteenth century that the large numbers of Protestants arrived in the county of Monaghan to build upon the foundation which had been laid down in the previous century. Settlers appear to have been attracted to the area both from Scotland and from other areas of Ulster by news from friends that Monaghan would be fertile ground for further Protestant settlement.¹⁸ And this at a time when large numbers of Presbyterians were inclined to relocate in North America.¹⁹ This outmigration of Presbyterians was particularly marked in the 1760s and 1770s, and as was the pattern in other parts of Ulster, the Presbyterian movement effected almost entire congregations. Once the notion of emigration took hold, then it would continue until it burned itself out. As the agent on the Barrett-Lennard estate reported,

I have noe newes, but there is one hundred Familleyes gone through this towne this week past for New England . . . Mr. Bellfore of Lisniskey has sett us fifty tates of land on the Cross of Clownis this day that is all wast, the Tenants being all gone to New England. I believe we shall have nothing left but Irish att last . . . 20

Thus the figure for Protestants in county Monaghan in the eighteenth century is much less than the number who actually moved there. Therefore, the size of the Protestant segment of the county's population represented below gives some idea of the large numbers of Protestants who flooded into the area.

18 The first known example of artificial stimulation of Protestant settlement in Monaghan was in 1734 when Kerr, owner of Newbliss brought Presbyterians to the area. See, Gilsenan, Parish of Killeevan, p 23.

19 On Ulster Presbyterian emigration to U S A see H J Ford, Scotch-Irish in America, (Princeton, 1915). It has been complemented by Wayland Dunaway, The Scotch-Irish of Colonial Pennsylvania, (Chapel Hill, 1944), James Leyburn, The Scotch-Irish: A Social History, (Chapel Hill, 1962) and R J Dickson, Ulster Emigration To Colonial America, (Belfast, 1976). See also some of the general histories, Maldwyn A Jones, American Immigration, (Chicago, 1970), Robert E Kennedy, The Irish, Emigration, Marriage, and Fertility, (Berkeley, 1973) et al.

20 Cited in B Hutton, 'The Barrett-Lennards of Clones', Clogher Record, Vol IV, No 3, (1962) pp 201-202.

Table 1.2: The 1766 Religious Census - County Monaghan

<u>Parish</u>	<u>Protestant Families</u>	<u>Papist Families</u>	<u>% Protestant</u>
Aghnamullen	268	686	28.1
Clones	489	700	41.1
Clontibret	271	680	28.5
Donagh	408	516	44.1
Donnemainne	79	705	10.1
Drumsart	74	133	35.7
Errigle	120	700	14.6
Galoone	482	876	35.5
Ematris	300	252	54.3
Inniskeen	10	269	3.6
Killanny	10	285	3.4
Kilmore	129	243	34.7
Magheracloony	24	262	8.4
Magheross	114	598	16.0
Monaghan	479	721	40.0
Muckno	393	196	66.7
Tedavnet	258	264	49.4
Tehallen	96	315	23.3
Tullycorbitt	<u>334</u>	<u>425</u>	<u>44.0</u>
	4,338	8,826	32.9
	<u><u> </u></u>	<u><u> </u></u>	<u><u> </u></u>

(Source: Duffy, Landholding in Monaghan, p 76)

These figures, taken in 1766 relate quite closely to the 1861 Census of Ireland.²¹ For example, it recorded a Protestant population of 26.63%. The figure above, 32.9%, is for families, and as Catholics had slightly larger families during eighteenth century, a larger family proportion would be expected. Also, Protestant emigration to America was a continuous factor throughout the eighteenth century.

²¹ A much deeper analysis of Protestant settlement in nineteenth century Monaghan is contained in the second half of this chapter; see below pp 50-55.

There are certain striking aspects of the 1766 figures. Muckno is not mentioned in the 1659 listing, but it emerges as the most English parish in the county by 1766 with 66.7%. Ematrix is similarly absent from the earlier listing, but it is likely that it was at that time part of Galoone parish. Generally, those parishes which had large numbers of English in them in 1659 have increased the settler segment of their population. In particular, the parishes in west Monaghan were, by the later date, extensively settled by Protestants. And the parish of Galoone or Dartrye which had only 9.9% English in 1659 was overwhelmingly settled by 1766. It had emerged as the south Dartrey parishes of Ematrix (54.3%), Drumsart (35.7%) and Galoone (35.5%). As a comparison with nineteenth century religious demography will indicate,²² the ethnic complexion of county Monaghan was settled in the period prior to 1766. This Protestant settlement also had the effect of linking this peripheral element within the Ulster equation firmly to its whole. And similarly,

This peripheral physical and cultural situation of Monaghan was reflected in the vigour of Protestant politics. The first editions of the Northern Standard in Monaghan (1839) adequately summarised Monaghan's position following more than a century of Protestant settlement: 'Monaghan may be termed the frontier county of the Protestant North,' and ' . . . the principles of the Journal . . . shall be strictly conservative of the British connexion . . .²³ in the Capitol of Irish Conservatism - the Protestant North.'

TERRITORIAL DIVISIONS

The basic land division in Ireland is the townland. There are one thousand, eight hundred and fifty-three townlands in county Monaghan. Due to the fact that Ulster was the most Gaelic of the four provinces at the end of the sixteenth century, the land settlements of 1591 and 1606 fossilised, to a large extent, the patterns of landholding in Ulster during the Gaelic period. One factor which indicates the continuity between pre and post settler land divisions in Monaghan is the townland boundaries of present day Monaghan.²⁴ It is extremely rare

22 See below, p 51.

23 Northern Standard editorials, 12 January, 1839 and 26 January, 1839, cited in Duffy, Landholding in County Monaghan, pp 79-80.

24 This whole question of continuity of Gaelic landholding patterns has been discussed by Duffy, 'Patterns of Landownership in Gaelic Monaghan in the Late Sixteenth Century,' Clogher Record, Vol X, No 3, (1981), pp 304-322.

for farm boundaries to cross the townland divisions. Thus, the original grants back to Irish settlers after the 1591 Settlement would naturally have followed the existant land divisions. These grants changed hands numerous times during the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but they retained their geographic integrity. And the continued use of the Irish name for townland, tate, has also been retained. Thus, the area outside Ballybay on the way to Swann's Cross retains the title 'The Eight Tates,' whilst placenames like Tattygar and Tattyreagh are modern derivations.

On average, the townlands in county Monaghan are one hundred and seventy-two acres. When compared to an overall grid of Irish townlands, this is about average. Generally, the tate was 'a very adequate expression of the carrying capacity of the land,'²⁵ at a time when the society had no means of surveying or making maps. Thus tates are often smaller on better land. That is, where the farming land is particularly good, the Gaelic system bequeathed smaller grants to individuals. This is reflected throughout Ireland, and in county Monaghan itself, a similar feature can be seen. Thus the townlands in Aghnamullen Parish average two hundred and fifty-eight acres, whereas the better land of the Monaghan corridor, which encompasses Tehallen parish, averages only one hundred and four acres.²⁶

The tates, in turn, were grouped into further divisions known as Ballybetaghs (Baile Biataigh). The ballybetagh usually consisted of sixteen tates grouped together. A superimposition of the ballybetaghs on a map of the civil parishes shows that the civil parishes were arrived at by the grouping of a number of ballybetaghs.²⁷ These civil parishes and the later ecclesiastical parishes of both the Church of Ireland and the Catholic Church in the diocese of Clogher thus reflect the ecclesiastical divisions which existed in Gaelic Ulster and were, in the case of county Monaghan, utilised to form the civil parishes which were, in turn,

²⁵ Ibid p 307.

²⁶ Duffy, Landholding in County Monaghan, p 27.

²⁷ Duffy, 'Landownership in Gaelic Monaghan,' has drawn up the boundaries of the sixteenth century tates and ballybetaghs and then related the ballybetagh boundaries to those of the modern civil parishes. See map p 311.

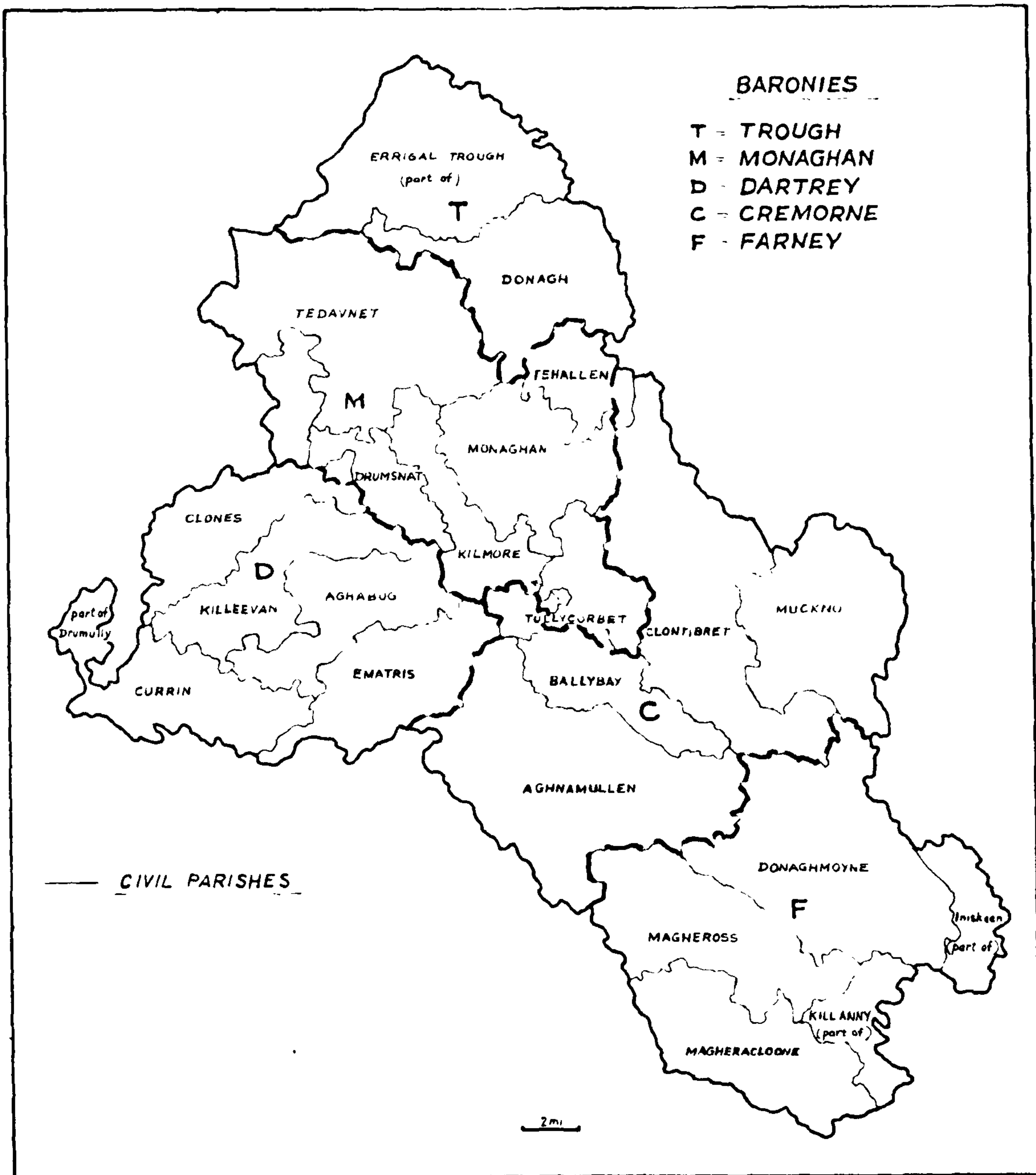


Fig 1.3

Source - Duffy Landholding in Co Monaghan Fig 1.9

the model for both the Episcopalian and later the Roman Catholic parochial systems. This is clearly evidenced by the large number of Church of Ireland churches which are built on the sites of older medieval ruins.²⁸

The final land division of Monaghan was the barony. The barony evolved out of the native territories into which the county had been broken up. They were, in fact, sub-kingdoms or chiefries which date from ninth or tenth century. The McMahon kingdom of Oriel (Airghialla) remained intact throughout the Gaelic period. By the late sixteenth century the boundaries of five baronies were settled. Basically, they follow the line of the old ballybetaghs. The decision to shire the unreformed parts of Ulster institutionalised the baronial divisions of the county.

There are only two further divisions of the county which are of interest. These were both nineteenth century innovations. In 1838, for example, the Poor Law Unions were established to administer the new poor law system. There were seven union towns to deal with the Monaghan area. These were Monaghan, Clones, Castleblayney, Carrickmacross, Clogher, Cootehill and Dundalk. Dundalk and Clogher, in counties Louth and Tyrone respectively, catered for little of county Monaghan. Cootehill, on the other hand, had a hinterland which extended into a large part of south Dartrey.

It is difficult to assess what Monaghan was like to live in during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Generally, travellers' accounts can be studied, and a notion of the social conditions of the people gleaned from their pages. In the case of Monaghan, this is not so simple. The reason for this is that the tour routes rarely included the county. This may be a testimony in itself, but it leaves the scholar attempting to sample life in eighteenth-century Monaghan at a loss. The most famous traveller through Ireland, Arthur Young, made a one-day excursion to Glaslough from county Armagh when he was staying there.²⁹ In the 1590s Monaghan was said to contain only a few defaced

28 See map of Monaghan parishes, Fig 1.3.

29 Arthur Young, Tour in Ireland, (London, 1892), Vol I, p 125.

monasteries, and nothing else of interest; whilst an account from the 1650s described Monaghan county as '... the most poor, barbarous, and despicable in the kingdom.'³⁰ Things appear to have improved somewhat during the eighteenth century because Beaufort could say of the urban areas,

MONAGHAN the assize town, is not contemptible; CLONES and CARRICKMACROSS are also pretty large, and in a state of improvement. To which must be added BALLIBAY, CASTLEBLAYNEY, GLASLOUGH, CASTLESHANE, and some other thriving villages.

The linen manufacture succeeds admirably especially in the Northern and Western parts of this county. 31

But still it was a county which neither delighted nor excited those travellers who visited Ireland. The structure of the society, then is available more readily in a discussion of the manner in which the society was ordered. To do this, it will be necessary to look at the divisions within society. And as Monaghan was primarily a rural area, on the periphery of the province of Ulster, we should now turn our gaze towards the manner of agricultural holding and its relationship to the religious demography of the area.

THE TERRITORIAL LANDSCAPE

The county of Monaghan was one of the most densely populated in Ireland in the nineteenth century.³² This problem was further exacerbated by the large preponderance of small-holdings. The first reliable agricultural data was published in 1851 for the county of Monaghan. However, the 1841 Census gives an indication of the size of farms in pre-Famine Ireland. It shows a line between the counties of Armagh, Monaghan, Cavan, Leitrim, Roscommon and Galway on the one side, and the midland counties of Louth, Meath, Westmeath and Longford on the other. North of the line over fifteen thousand of the farms were

³⁰ Cited in Freeman, Ireland, Its Physical, Social and Economic Geography, p 100.

³¹ D A Beaufort, Memoir of A Map of Ireland; illustrating the Topography of that Kingdom, and containing A Short Account of Its Present State Civil and Ecclesiastical; with a complete index to the Map, (London, 1792), p 38. Some discussion of the towns and villages of Monaghan, and of the linen industry follows later in this chapter. See pp 20-22.

³² Population density is discussed below, pp 37/9.

AVERAGE SIZE of EFFECTIVE HOLDING 1851

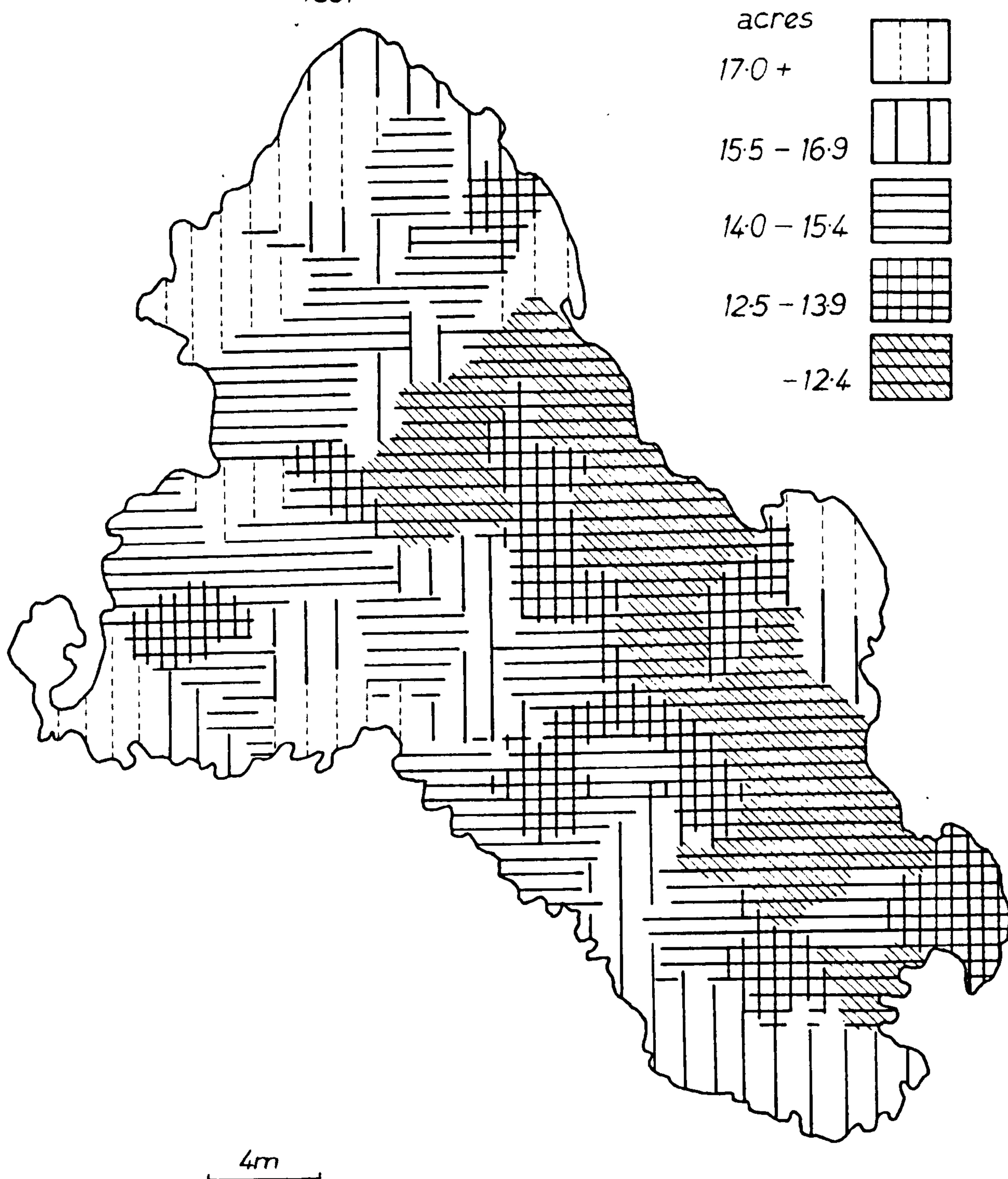


Fig.1.4

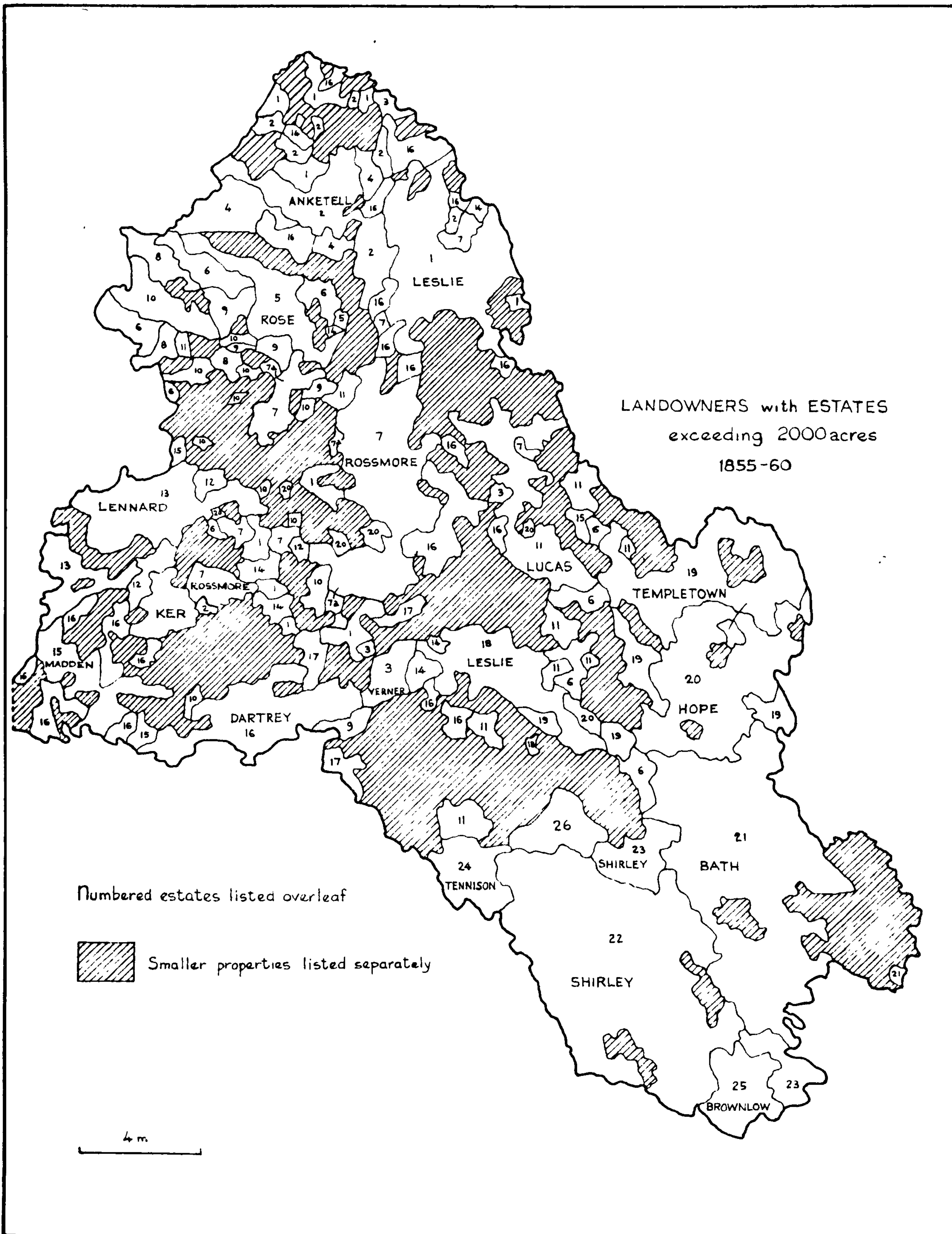


Fig.1.5

Source :- Duffy . Landholding in Co Monaghan Fig 4 5

Landowners with Estates exceeding
2,000 acres

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Extent (Acres)</u>
1	Leslie, John	Glaslough	13,620
2	Anketell, Wm.	Anketell Grove, Emyvale	7,500
3	Verner, Sir Wm. Bart.	Verner's Bridge, Moy	2,526
4	Singleton, Thomas Crawford	Fortsingleton, Emyvale	4,490
5	Rose, Gertrude	Mullagmore, Tedavnet	3,942
6	Hamilton, James	Corrcassa, Monaghan	7,315
7	Rossmore, The Lord	Rossmore, Monaghan	14,839
7A	Westenra, Henrietta	Queen's County	4,483
8	Woodwright, Wm.	Gola House, Scotstown	3,264
9	Forster, Sir Geo. Bart.	Coolderry, Carrickmacross	2,062
10	Lewis, Henry Owen	Fitzwilliam Sq. Dublin	2,488
11	Lucas, Edward	Castleshane, Co. Monaghan	9,955
12	Forster, Wm.	Ballynure, Clones	2,093
13	Lennard, Sir T.B.	England	7,920
14	Ker, Andrew Allen Murray	Newbliss	3,605
15	Madden, John	Clones	4,644
16	Cremourne, Lord (Earl of Dartrey)	Rockcorry	17,345
17	Plunket, The Right Hon. Lord	Bray, Co. Dublin	3,166
18	Leslie, Emily	Ballybay	5,463
19	Templetown, Viscount	Templepatrick, Co. Down	12,845
20	Hope, Ann Adile	Castleblayney	11,700
21	Bath, Most Hon The Marquis of	Berkeley Sq. London	22,762
22	Shirley, Evelyn Philip	Loughfea, Carrickmacross	26,386
23	Shirley, Horatio	Portman Sq. London	4,197
24	Tennison, Wm.	Shantony, Castleblayney	2,696
25	Brownlow, Wm.	Abbeyleix, Queen's Co.	2,959
26	Rothwell (Fitzherbert)	Navan, Co. Meath	2,388

between one and five acres. And in Armagh, Cavan and Monaghan there were over ten thousand holdings between five and fifteen acres. Of the midland counties, each had fewer than ten thousand holdings in both categories.³³ When Monaghan itself is looked at in 1851, only 2.4% of its farms were over fifty acres, whereas the figure for Meath was 24% and Waterford and Tipperary in the south, registered rates of 28% and 17% respectively.³⁴

Within the county itself there was a considerable variation in farm size, as indicated in Figure 1.4. In the barony of Farney over one-quarter of all holdings were under five acres. Over half of the holdings in the barony of Cremorne were between five and fifteen acres. On the other hand, the farms around Clones in the west of the county were mostly over fifteen acres. Similarly, in the baronies of Monaghan, Dartrey and Trough, farms generally fell into the fifteen to thirty acre bracket. The Monaghan corridor which runs through each of these baronies was, in part, responsible for this feature, which was mirrored in the other lowland region which traversed south Dartrey from Newbliss to Castleblayney.³⁵ These regions all enjoy superior land, with the exception of Trough. In north-west Trough the larger farms reflect the inferiority of the land.

THE ESTATES

A major element in the rural situation in nineteenth century Ireland was the extent and management of the large estates. As already noted,³⁶ many of the estates had been in existence for some considerable time. The Barrett-Lennard property around Clones was originally in the hands of Sir Henry Duke in 1588, and it came down to the current owners in the mid-nineteenth century almost unaltered,³⁷ through the female line. The barony of Farney is another case in point. It was granted

33 Duffy, Landholding in County Monaghan, p 97

34 Ibid p 99.

35 Ibid.

36 See above, pp 5-6.

37 See Duffy, Landholding in County Monaghan, Appendix I, also Brian Hutton, 'Barrett-Lennards of Clones,' in Clogher Record, Vol IV, (1962), pp 201-202 and much of the work of Pilip O'Mordha; see his entries in the bibliography.

by Elizabeth I to Walter Devereux, First Earl of Essex, on 9 May 1576. Robert, the third earl, died without issue in 1646 and the estates passed through the female line to the Shirley and Bath families.³⁸ However, this was not usual. The majority of the estates in the county date from the period of the Cromwellian settlement or later. Large holdings such as Anketell and Johnston of Trough, Corry of Rockcorry and Forster of Tedavnet dated from the Cromwellian settlement. The Blayney property around Castleblayney was granted at the beginning of the seventeenth century, whereas Madden of Dartrey, Evatt, Wright and Lucas of Monaghan, Singleton of Trough and Tennison of Cremorne all gained their lands after the Cromwellian period.³⁹

Figure 1.5 gives an indication of the extent and location of the major estates. Of the twenty-six estates which fall into this category, twenty-four of them date from the mid-seventeenth century.⁴⁰ They also share the benefit of being located in the lowland areas of the county. In general, they are located below the four hundred foot contour.⁴¹ The very largest estates are solid masses placed in the lowland plains. However, the scattered nature of some of the holdings indicates the entrepreneurial activities of some of the families during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A process described by one scholar as the result of 'successful business and matrimonial enterprise.'⁴² Whilst it is true that all the estates are situated upon the better land in the county (the Monaghan corridor or the central or southern lowlands), those estates which are ten thousand acres or over, are generally situated in more fertile areas than those under that size.

This feature is even more marked when the estates between one thousand and two thousand acres are located. As Table 1.6 indicates, they were situated on the more hilly, and therefore, less economically viable areas of the county. These properties have been shown to have been more

38 See Shirley Papers, P R O N I , D 3531.

39 Duffy, Landholding in County Monaghan, p 55.

40 Duffy Irish Landholding Structures and Population in the Mid-Nineteenth Century, Maynooth Review, Vol III, No 2, (1977), p 17.

41 Ibid.

42 A P W Malcolmson, Absenteeism in eighteenth century Ireland, Irish Economic and Social History, Vol I, (1974), p 25.

PROPERTIES 1000-2000 acres
1855-60

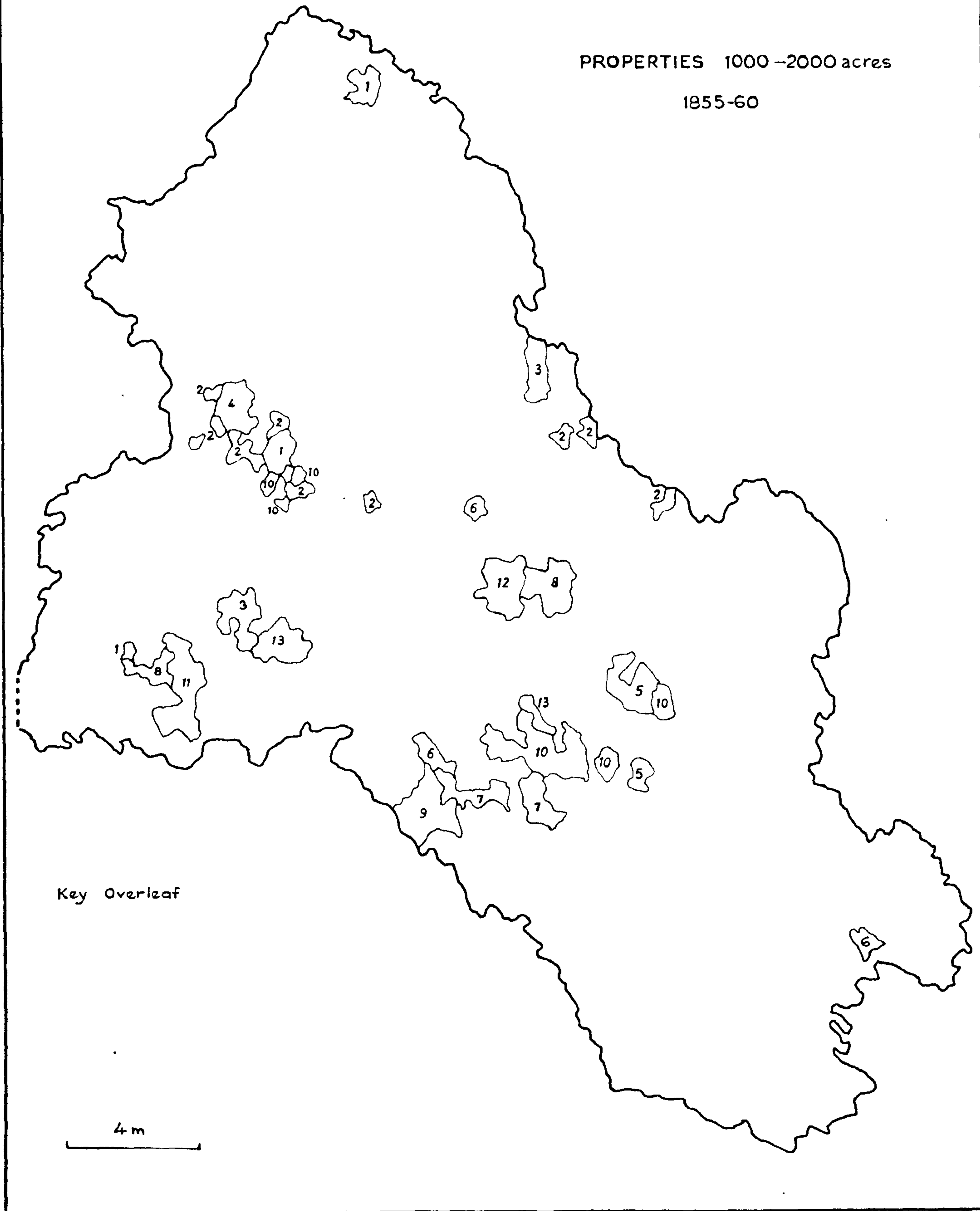


Fig. 1. 6

Source :- Duffy Landholding in Co Monaghan Fig 4 6.

Owners of Properties of 1,000-2,000 acres

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Extent</u> <u>(Acres)</u>
1	Bunbury, Kane	Wickloe	1,226
2	Clonmel, Lord	Naas	1,952
3	Coote, Capt. Thomas	Raconnell House, Monaghan	1,905
4	Evatt, Samuel Robt.	Smithborough	1,241
5	Fitzgerald, John	Castleblayney	1,215
6	Leslie, Capt. John	Kiltybegs, Carrickmacross	1,027
7	McMath, Andrew and Hamilton	Castleblayney	1,429
8	Mayne, Rev. Charles	Killaloe, Co. Clare	1,810
9	Mayne, Colburn	London	1,640
10	Montgomery, Alexander Nixon	Delgany, Co. Wicklow	1,186
11	Quinn, Rev. John C.	Rathfriland, Newry	1,471
12	Rowley, Henry	Rockmullen, Ballybay	1,133
13	Stanley, Wm. Stone	Southampton	1,050

liable to sale and resale, and they seem to have been grist for the speculators' mills. Some of the small estates in south-west Cremorne were Cromwellian landgrants, but on the whole,⁴³ there was much less continuity of ownership and boundary on the smaller estates than upon their larger neighbours. And with the estates between five hundred and one thousand acres almost none could be traced back to the Cromwellian settlement period, and most of their owners had acquired them in the first half of the nineteenth century.

As the smaller estates were bought often for the purpose of land speculation, one might expect that they would be less efficiently managed than those which were blessed with resident owners whose families had lived on the estates for some time. The degree of absenteeism can be gauged by studying the addresses of the landlords. Of the twenty-six estates listed in Figure 1.5 only eight were absentee. However, of the remaining eighteen with Monaghan addresses, there is no way of discovering how long the incumbent landlords were out of the county sampling the delights of either London or Dublin. Half of the fourteen landowners listed in Figure 1.6 were non-resident, whilst the majority of estates under one thousand acres were owned by absentees, although a large number of these had addresses in Ireland.⁴⁴ It is thus clear that absenteeism was much greater on the smaller, less economic estates.⁴⁵ And another feature of absentee and speculator estates was that they were less likely to enjoy the benefits of investment. For example, landlords would often offer free lime to tenants for their land, or give aid in the improvement of fences or reroofing a dwelling. A prime example of this sort of activity is seen in the career of Evelyn John Shirley and later his son Evelyn Philip Shirley. The Shirleys are generally accepted to have been notoriously bad landlords. Much of this is a direct result of E J Shirley's activities after the 1826 General Election in Monaghan.⁴⁶ He had, in fact, been renowned as a good and

43 Duffy, Landholding in County Monaghan, pp 180-185.

44 Duffy, Irish Landholding Structures and Population, p 18.

45 Duffy, Landholding in County Monaghan, p 184.

46 See below, Ch 2, pp 75/9.

indulgent landlord up to the election.⁴⁷ Under the agency of Sandy Mitchell the estate was ruled severely, but when he died there was a lessening of tension. A good example of the benevolent nature of E J Shirley is seen in the model farm he built, the ploughing matches, horticultural shows, gifts of free lime and other indulgences which he offered his tenants during the second half of his career at Lough Fea.⁴⁸ The Shirleys were not alone in this activity, and a large number of the landowners in Monaghan was willing to aid the tenants. However, as the size of estate diminished, so too did the instances of such activity.⁴⁹ An example of the benevolent absentee would be the Barrett-Lennard estate around Clones. Although a perennially absent landlord family, the estate was renowned to be among the most liberal and well-run in the county.⁵⁰ And, on the other hand, one or two of the very small estates were similarly well-run.⁵¹ The estates and their management were of importance for more than simply directing the lives of their tenants, as possibly the single most important element in rural Ireland, they effected the whole population. And their management or mismanagement were of incalculable significance to not only political affairs in the county, but also to social and economic conditions. For example, the existence or not of overcrowding in rural Ireland often depended upon the activities of the local landlords and their agent in regard to subdivision of holdings. They are thus,

. . . of fundamental importance as territorial indicators of variations in population and settlement in the mid-nineteenth century. The ultimate intensity of settlement on different estates depended on the manner in which both parties - owners and peasantry - exploited the land at their disposal. Even on a national scale, all the 'superficial' measures of population pressure, such as farm-size, land-use, proportions of population living in towns and villages, rural industry and general economic conditions, ultimately reflected⁵² the controlling hand of the landowning class.

47 L O'Mearain, 'Estate Agents in Farney: Trench & Mitchell,' Clogher Record, Vol X, No 3, (1981), p 407.

48 See the Shirley Papers recently deposited in P R O N I, D 3531. A reappraisal of the Shirley family's activities in Monaghan in the nineteenth century will eventually result.

49 Duffy, Irish Landholding Structures and Population, pp 18-19.

50 See evidence William Fitzgerald, Bessborough Commission, H C 1881.

51 Duffy, Landholding in County Monaghan, p 184.

52 Ibid.

It is thus necessary to turn our attention towards the population of the county and its activities in the nineteenth century. Because of the cataclysmic effects of the Great Famine, special attention will be paid to it and its effect upon rural Monaghan.

While the territorial divisions of Monaghan are important, a more significant factor in shaping the political process was interaction between distinctive denominational groups. The size and nature of the population of Monaghan, its pursuits, both economic and social, and its aspirations all had significant effects upon the manner in which the political representation of the county evolved. The period upon which this study focuses, 1868-1883, was less than two decades removed from the worst famine ever experienced in a western European country, and the vicissitudes of this tragedy when so many were forced to make the inexorable choice between starvation and emigration left an indelible mark upon the psyche of the men whose electoral responses we chronicle later.

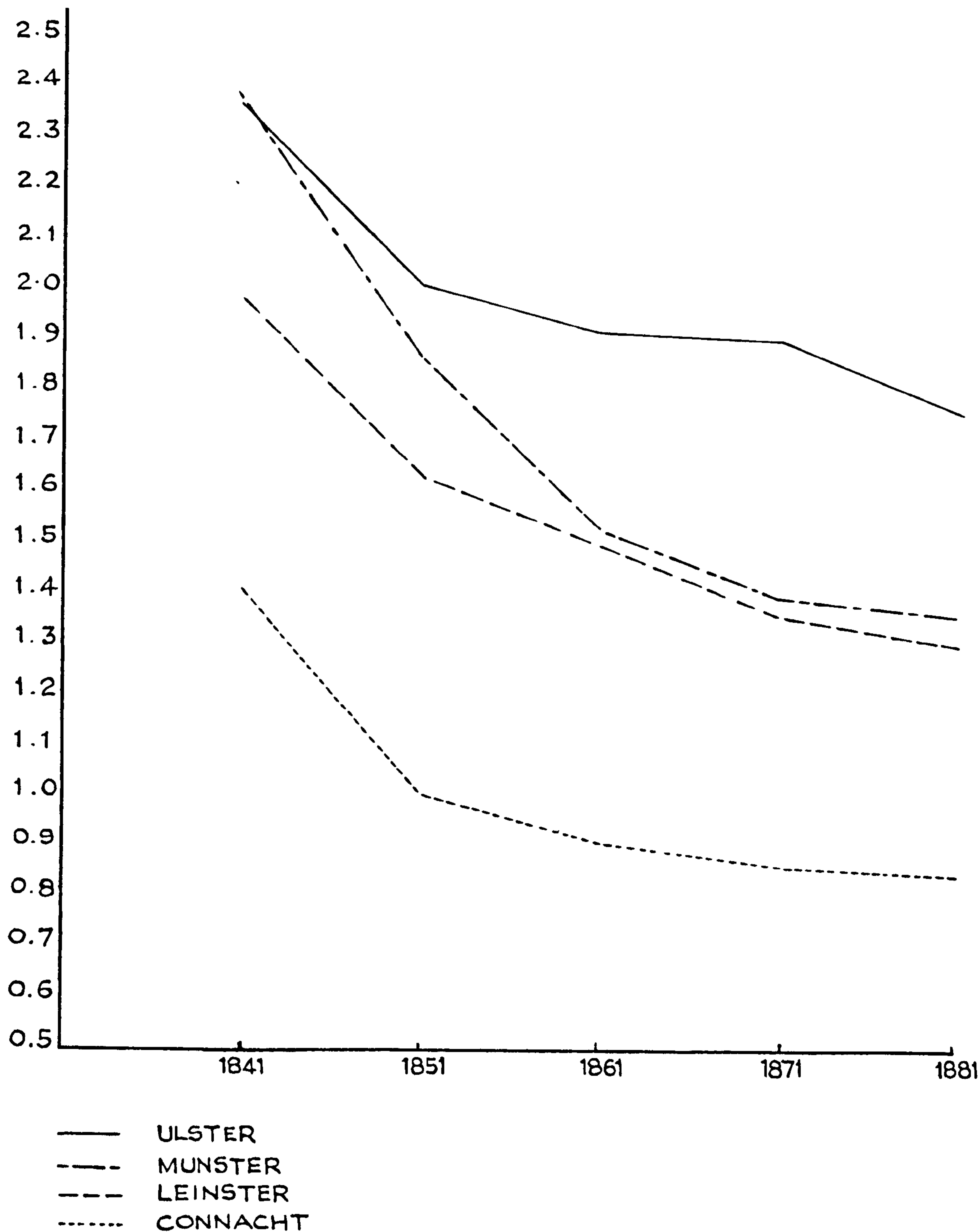
The most obvious aspect of the famine aftermath was the massive decrease in the population of the island.⁵³ From 1841-1851 the country's population fell from around 8.5 million people to 6.5 million.⁵⁴ This population decrease was not, of course, a universal phenomenon. As the famine affected some areas of the country to a greater extent than others, the rate of population decrease mirrors the resultant upheaval in the different localities. Figures chronicling population decrease are further obscured by internal migration; thus Dublin county which was scarcely affected by the famine itself suffered the hardship of having to cope with a massive increase of destitute poor from the south and west. Dublin county's population shows an increase of 9% during the period 1841-1851,⁵⁵ which was a pointer of increased hardship and not of affluence.

53 Figures for Ireland's population have been taken from Census of Population (Ireland), 1841-1891. An excellent summary of the Census statistics is contained in W E Vaughan and A J Fitzpatrick, Irish Historical Statistics. Population, 1821-1971, (Dublin, 1978), Ancillary Publication of T W Moddy, F X Martin, F J Byrne, eds, A New History of Ireland, (Dublin, 1978). The figure of 8,175,124 in 1841 does not indicate the total at mid-decade, which point is discussed later.

54 Actual figures were 8,175,124 and 6,552,386 respectively. This represents a decrease of 20%.

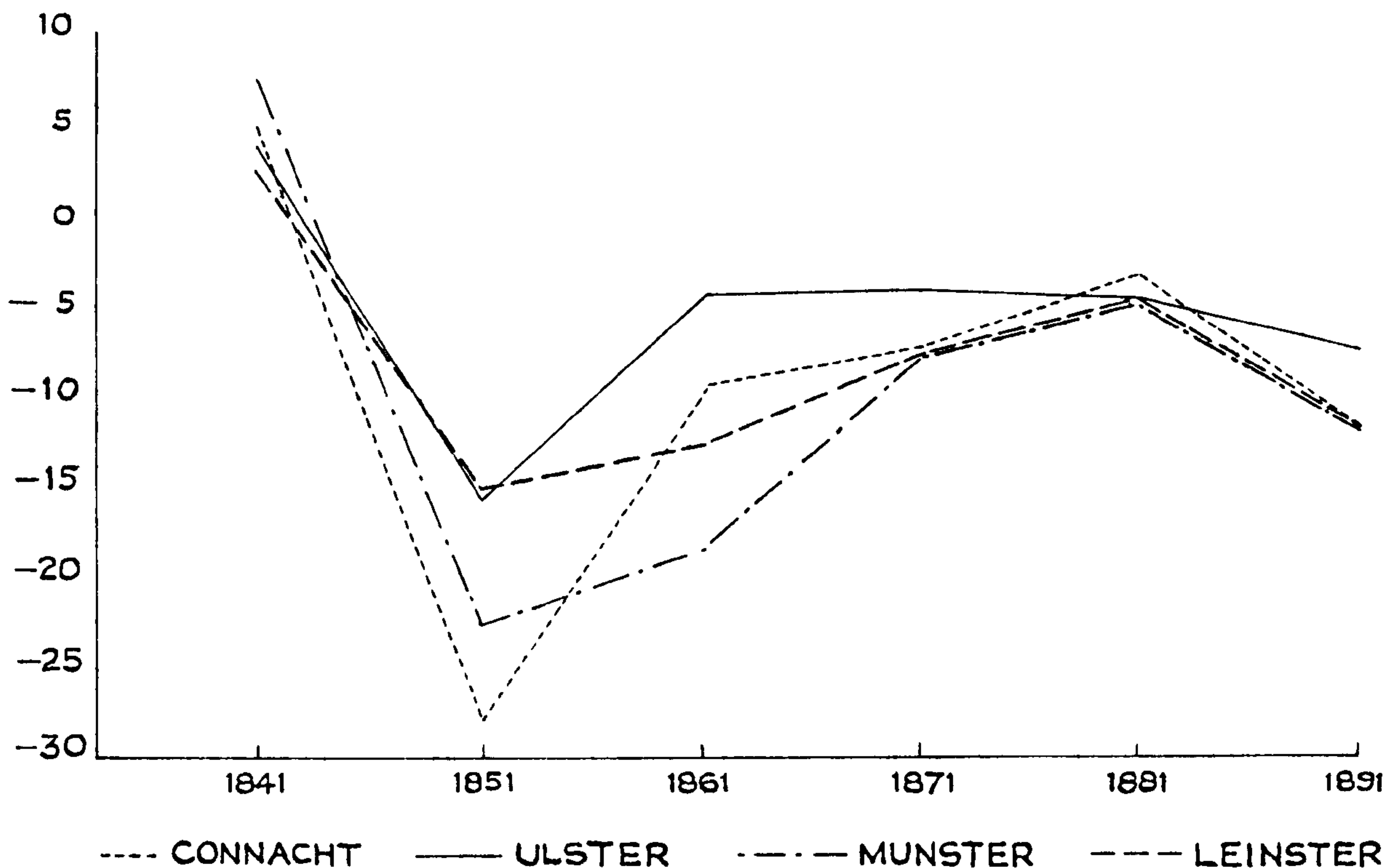
55 Data on population at the time of the famine is contained in a number of works. A recent survey is Ruth Dudley Edwards, An Atlas of Irish History, (London, 1973), pp 216-224.

TABLE 1.3 shows the provincial decrease in population for the period 1841-1881.



In 1841 Munster had a fractionally higher population than Ulster and these two provinces were, by far, the most populous. Leinster, which includes the nation's capital, had close to two million people whilst Connacht was the smallest. In the decade after 1841 the population decrease in Munster was sufficient to leave it with a smaller population than Ulster. Population decline was most significant in Connacht. But the effect which the famine had upon the population of the island is, perhaps, more ably demonstrated by plotting the percentage decline within each province.

Table 1.4 indicates the percentage decline in each province during the period 1841-1891. The figure for 1841 records the population fluctuation as against the total for 1831.



That is, during the period 1831-1841 the population in each of the provinces rose by about five per cent. Obviously the most significant population decline occurred in the period 1841-1851. The greatest percentage decrease in the provincial populations took place in the provinces

of Connacht and Munster, which registered declines of 28.81% and 22.47% respectively. Connacht, however, experienced a much smaller rate of decline during the following decade. Munster, on the other hand, whilst not as badly hit as Connacht during the first period, did not enjoy the same level of improvement either. Thus, the average decline over the twenty years from 1841-1861 was slightly greater for Munster (36.83%) than for Connacht (35.65%). Leinster and Ulster, as might be expected, suffered the least. Ulster, whilst experiencing a decline of 15.6% during the first decade, was subject to a deficit in population of fractionally under 5% for the following thirty years.

The figures for Leinster and Ulster are partially explained by the process of urbanisation which Ireland was undergoing during this period. Large numbers of destitute poor made their way to Belfast and Dublin. The population of Belfast increased by 23.58% from 1841-1851 and by a massive 39.67% in the following ten years. The rise in Dublin's population was not so dramatic, 11.02% in the former period and a decrease of 1.38% during the latter period.⁵⁶ Urban population in Ireland did not show an overall increase during the period, but this was due to an actual decline in the smaller towns.⁵⁷ The early nineteenth century had not seen a large urbanisation process. Manufacturing in the country was small, and thus town growth was weak. The large increase in the population of the island had been largely determined by the possibility of establishing new farms.⁵⁸ This was evidenced by the fact that that part of Ireland where subdivision was easiest, west of the Shannon, saw a population increase of over 30%. The counties of Sligo, Leitrim, Galway and Kerry experienced increases of over 40% in the period 1821-1841.⁵⁹

Population size is only part of the story, however. Just as significant was the density of population. A rough line drawn from Dundalk to Galway divides the county into a northern area with a very high population density, and a southern half with a comparatively low

⁵⁶ See below, p 21.

⁵⁷ Dublin and Belfast both grew rapidly during this period.

⁵⁸ S H Cousens, 'Regional Death Rates in Ireland during the Great Famine, from 1846-1851,' Population Studies, Pt 1, (July, 1960), p 55.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

density of population.⁶⁰ In south Ulster the population was further concentrated in the rural areas. At the time of the 1841 Census, around 20% of the population resided in urban areas. In south and west Ulster the proportion of urban dwellers for the counties Monaghan, Cavan, Fermanagh and Tyrone varied from 7% to 10%.⁶¹ Clearly, any misfortune which would specifically affect rural areas would be potentially very dangerous in the south-west portions of Ulster.

Just as each province experienced varying degrees of depopulation, so too, did the individual counties. Thus, Figure 1.7 indicates the percentage decline per county during the period 1841-1851. County Dublin was the only county in Ireland which had an increase in population. This figure (9%) reflects the almost total lack of the famine upon the population in the county which was, in any case, hardly affected by subsistence agriculture. As the influx of paupers increased, guards were placed on the approach roads to the city to ensure that only those with the money to engage a passage elsewhere would be admitted into the nation's capital.⁶² Nevertheless, tens of thousands flocked in, many of them only to fall victim to the typhus epidemic of 1847 or the Asiatic Cholera which shortly thereafter caused over five thousand fatalities.⁶³ The counties of Down and Antrim which suffered considerably hardship in certain isolated areas, share the distinction with county Wexford of undergoing the smallest population decrease in the country. The figures for the two Ulster counties may evince similar urban overspill, as in county Dublin.

The figures given in Figure 1.7 reflect the percentage of the population in each county which disappeared. Thus, they are not demonstrative of simple volume. A correlation of the nett figures leaving each county would tend to mislead, as it would give no indication of the proportion of a county's population which either left or died. But important as the county figures are, equally significant is the population density of each county. Although this does

60 Duffy, Landholding in County Monaghan, p 208.

61 Ibid, p 209.

62 Peter Somerville-Large, Dublin, (London, 1981), p 244.

63 Ibid, pp 245-246.

PERCENTAGE POPULATION DECLINE BY COUNTY, 1841-1851

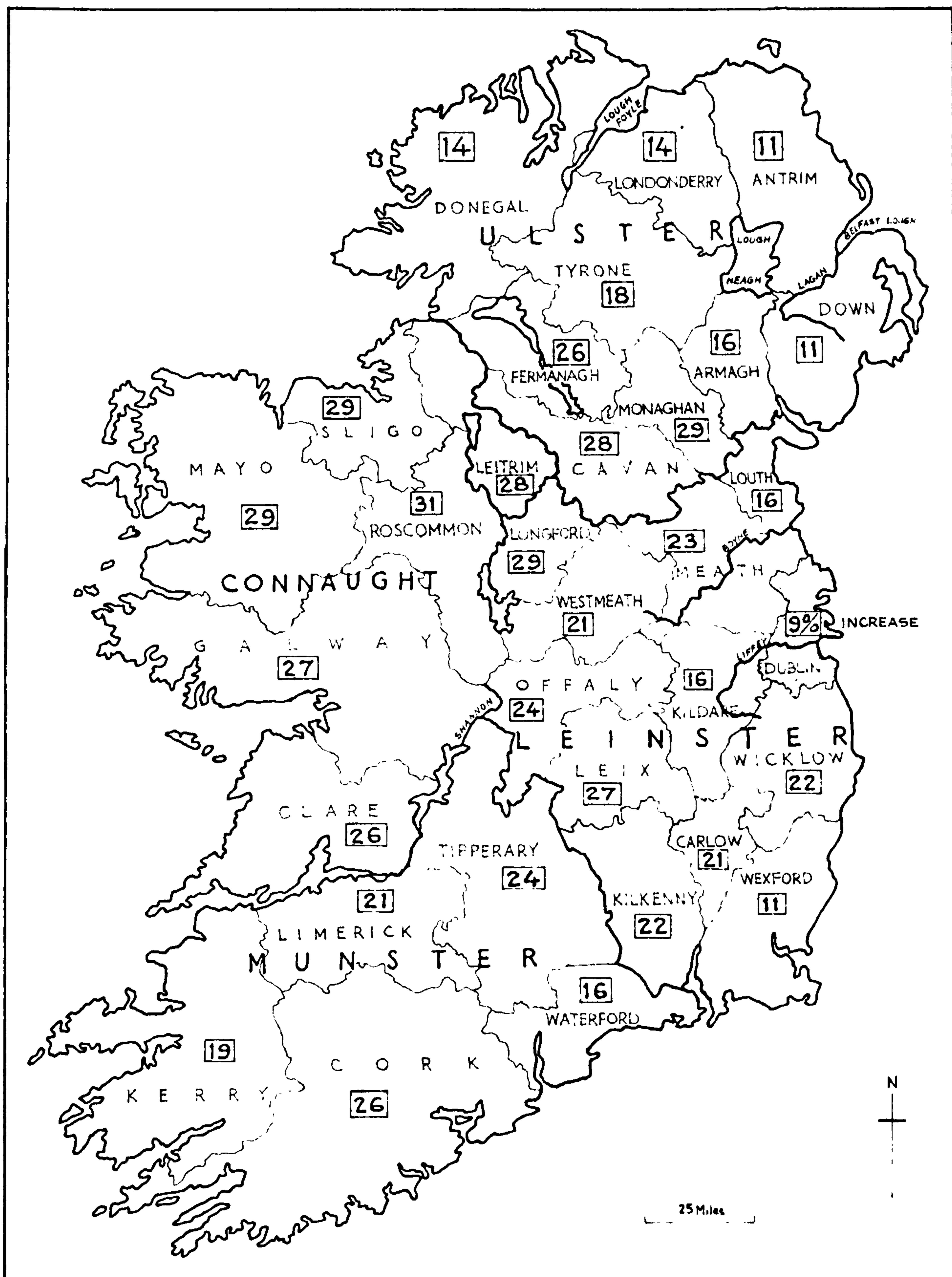


Fig. 1. 7

not indicate the proportion which left, it will complement those figures. That is, the greater the concentration, the more effect the process would have had upon the population which remained. If an area was densely populated, then one family's misfortune would affect a much larger number of neighbours and friends than if the area was sparsely populated. As noted above, Monaghan lay in the most densely populated part of the island, in the area north of the line from Galway to Dundalk.⁶⁴

As Figure 1.7 indicates, Monaghan registered the highest population reduction in Ulster. Only one county in Ireland, Roscommon (31%), was subject to greater population decline. Along with Monaghan with a 29% decrease were counties Sligo, Mayo and Longford. Each of these is among those counties which have been traditionally held to have been among the hardest hit during the famine. Studies of the Great Famine have tended to concentrate upon the effects of the potato blight upon the south and the west of the island. The effect of the famine upon the people of county Monaghan, then, has gone unnoticed, to a large extent.

Monaghan's population had been increasing slowly during the period up to 1841. From 1821-1831 the population had risen from 174,697 people to 195,536 (11.93%) but the rate decreased during the following decade with a growth rate of only 4,902 people or 2.51%. This suggests that the population of the county may have leveled out prior to the outbreak of the potato blight. This has the effect of maximising the total number of people who left Ireland as a result of the disaster, but of minimising the proportion of the population affected. Thus, for county Monaghan, this maximising effect has led to one suggestion that the population would have reached 220,000 by 1846.⁶⁵ If this were true, it could be argued that the county lost some 40% of its population. This does not gain support from our study of the rate of population increase in the preceding decades. And a study of the size of population upon the Trinity College estates indicates that population

⁶⁴ Table 1.5 below gives the population density of Monaghan and its surrounding counties.

⁶⁵ This estimate is made in Livingston, The Monaghan Story, p 211.

was falling by 1846.⁶⁶ Whether or not this holds true for the whole island is impossible to ascertain, but it does tend to suggest that the usual claims of a rapidly increasing population in Ireland right up to the outbreak of famine, are unlikely.

Monaghan's decline is even more starkly demonstrated when compared with the other counties in Ulster. It experienced two and one-half times the decline in Down and Antrim (11%), over twice that of Donegal and Londonderry (14%), and well over that of Armagh (16%) and Tyrone (18%). Only Fermanagh (26%) and Cavan (28%) rivalled Monaghan. Partly this was due to the county's population density overburdening the land in the first place, but it was also a result of the nature of landholding in the area; a very large cottier class lived in this part of the country, the vast majority of whose farms were less than five acres. The extent of subdivision as a factor in the rural Monaghan scene can be seen in the preponderance of certain names in specific areas.⁶⁷ There was, then, in Monaghan a large rural population, living on small farms and thus at the mercy of any potential disaster which might occur. It was not surprising that many members of the lowest class in the county had to resort to other than agrarian pursuits to supplement their meagre earnings.

LINEN INDUSTRY IN MONAGHAN

So as to supplement earnings, the cottiers of county Donegal generally laboured in the fields of Scotland where they helped with the potato harvest. The migratory workers of Monaghan worked in Ireland, principally in counties Sligo, Leitrim, Longford and Roscommon. Generally speaking, labourers in the east of the county, especially from the barony of Farney, migrated to the grain fields of county Meath. In west Monaghan, in Cremorne, Dartrey and Monaghan baronies migration to harvest the hay and potato crops of east Connacht was undertaken.

66 F J Carney, 'Pre-Famine Irish Population: The Evidence from the Trinity College Estates,' Irish Economic and Social History, Vol II, (1975), pp 35-45.

67 Duffy has plotted family names in the county using the 1861 Census and Griffith Valuation Books, demonstrating that, 'In the small farm, intensively occupied-districts, the land was persistently fragmented to cater for the growing pre-famine population.' See his, 'Irish Landholding Structures and Population in the Mid-Nineteenth Century,' Maynooth Review, Vol III No 2 (December 1977), pp 3-27.

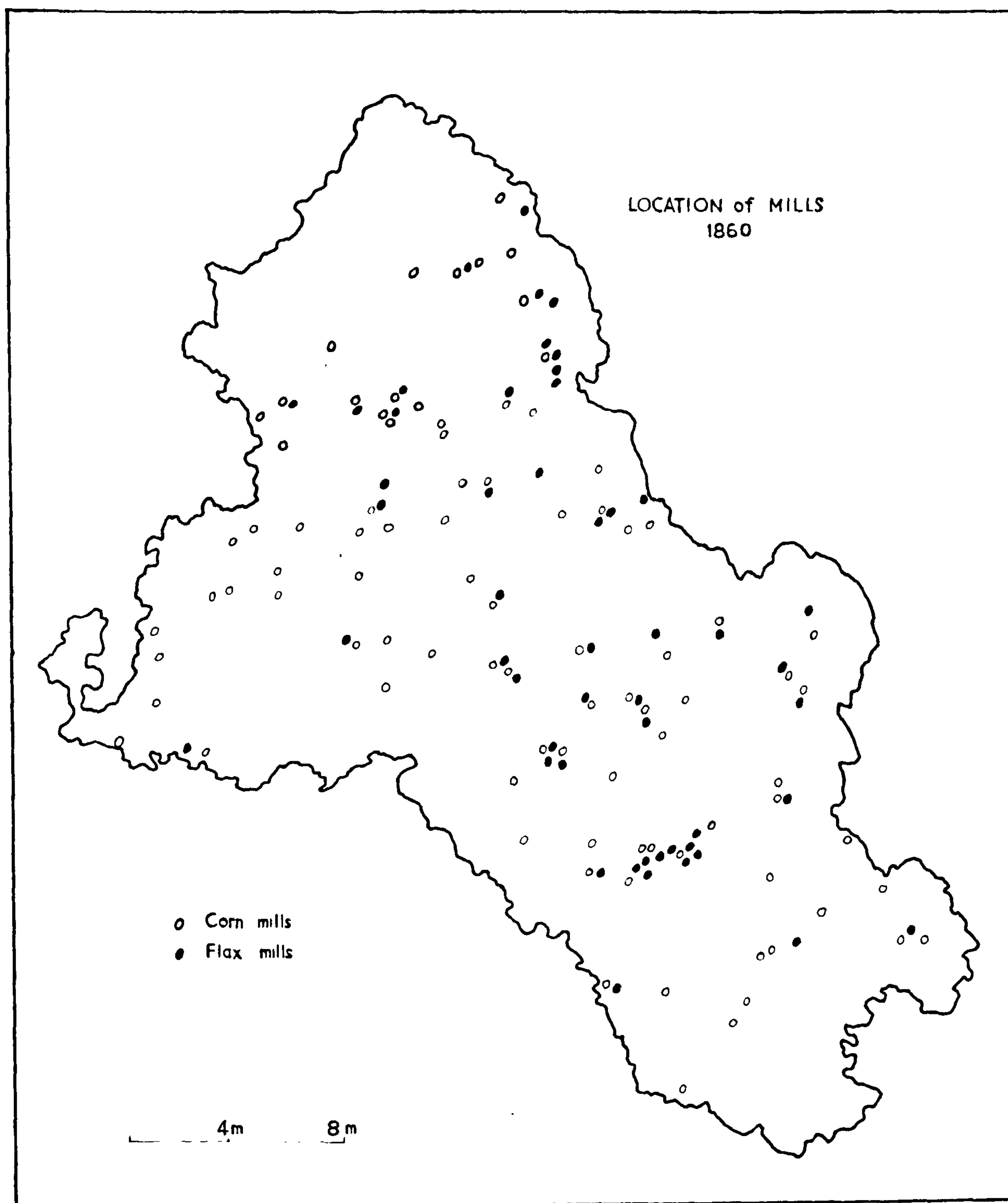


Fig.1.8

Source - Duffy Landholding in Co Monaghan Fig 37

But seasonal labour was not sufficient to raise a large family, and the void in family earnings was usually filled by the linen industry. Linen manufacture in the linen triangle from Lisburn to Dungannon to Armagh City was primarily in the hands of the smaller farmers with holdings between five and twenty acres. Early on in the development of the industry they had bought out the cottier class. This was not the case in Cavan/Monaghan. Whereas in the Lagan valley an out-weaver might be involved to provide the butter for the bread, in Cavan/Monaghan the industry was required to simply provide the bread.

The introduction of the trade into the county was generally at the instigation of the local landlords. As early as 1703, Edward Lucas of Castleshane had established a colony of weavers on his estate, and his efforts were shortly followed by William Cairnes of Monaghan Town.⁶⁸ This process of stimulation of linen led to the spread of spinning and weaving away from its east Ulster base as far afield as Donegal, Mayo and Leitrim. In part, the efforts of the landlords of Monaghan were attempts to introduce an indigenous Protestant population within the county. However, by the end of the eighteenth century, Catholics were also becoming involved in the trade.

In Monaghan, unlike counties Londonderry and Antrim, the cottier-weaver was dependent upon the tenant farmer to let him a small holding and supply his yarn. This placed him in a position where he either had to weave for the farmer at a poor price, or else pay a ridiculous figure for his yarn.⁶⁹ If he did not co-operate, being a tenant at will, he could find himself without a holding the following year. This placed the weaver in a less tenable position in Monaghan than his compatriot in other parts of Ulster.

Nevertheless, from the small beginnings of such people as Lucas and Cairnes, the industry spread throughout the county. The core of the industry within Monaghan was founded in the baronies of Monaghan and Dartrey. Weaving and spinning declined as one moved west towards

68 W H Crawford, 'Economy and Society in South Ulster in the Eighteenth Century,' Clogher Record, Vol VIII, No 3, (1975), p 246.

69 W H Crawford, Domestic Industry in Ireland. The experience of the linen industry, (Dublin, 1972), p 25.

the Fermanagh border on the one side, and the barony of Cremourne on the other. By 1758 it was reported that, "there is now as much linen cloth sold in this county (Monaghan) as was exported in the year 1703 from the whole kingdom."⁷⁰ As the century progressed, the industry became firmly established in the northern and western parishes of the county. However, it was never of any great importance in Farney, and the linen market at Carrickmacross died quickly, being situated too far south.⁷¹

As the spinning of yarn and the weaving of cloth spread throughout the area, the towns within the region (with the exception of Carrickmacross) were able to quickly exploit the new industry. Monaghan town, Clones, Castleblayney and Ballybay all 'cashed in' on the trade, but Cootehill in neighbouring county Cavan quickly established itself as the focal point of the trade. By 1783 it was one of the most prominent linen towns in Ireland outside of the linen triangle. As early as 1740 the conversion of yarn into cloth had become a feature of the town. And it gradually grew in importance. By the end of the century Beaufort noted that where- as Cavan town was neither large nor commercial, 'COOTEHILL has the advantage of a well frequented linen market, in which great sums of money are weekly circulated.'⁷²

Throughout the period 1783-1820 the markets of Monaghan and Cavan counties accounted for roughly one-seventh of the entire Ulster linen trade.⁷³ This benefited the local weavers in so far as the closeness of the market place lessened the cost of transportation. However, it also intensified the industry within the area, making it more localised, less diversified and almost entirely dependent upon local capital. Thus, a decline in the industry could strike such an area far harder than one which drew its capital from a number of centres.

70 Harris Ms, (1758), Public Library Armagh, cited in Duffy, Landholding in County Monaghan, p 103.

71 Ibid, p 104.

72 Beaufort, Memoir of a Map of Ireland, p 36.

73 Crawford, Economy and Society in South Ulster, p 251.

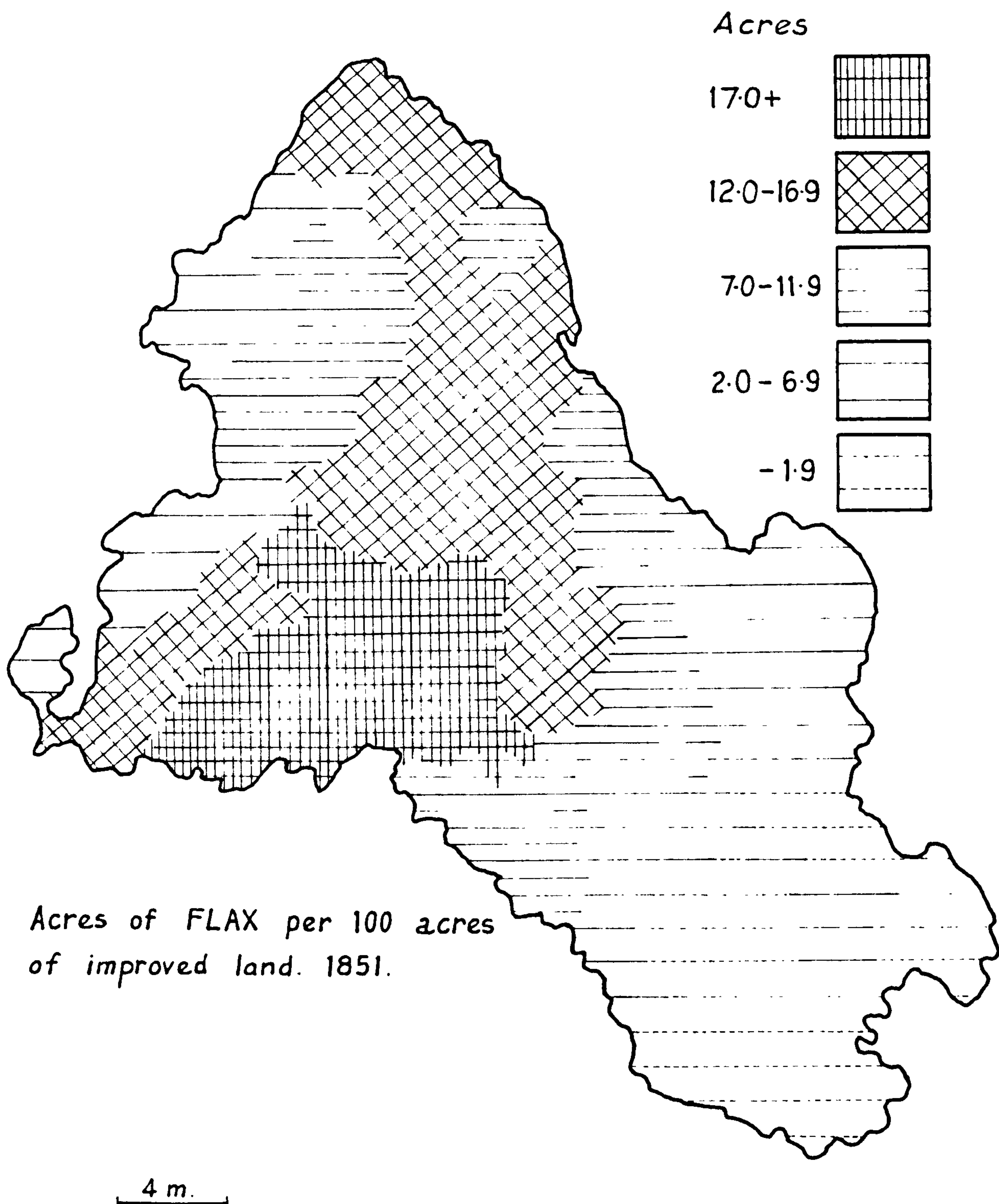


Fig. 1. 9

Although Monaghan never rivalled some of the counties which made up the core area of this industry, linen manufacture had, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, diffused throughout the county from its original base in Monaghan and Dartrey baronies.⁷⁴ This widespread diffusion can be seen in the existence of mills spread throughout the area. Granted the mills had to be located in specific geographic areas, principally near rivers for water power, the fact that they are spread out into the western periphery of Cremourne and Farney baronies, indicates that the industry had a much greater effect upon the adjacent areas of the county to the core area. Nevertheless, those areas which did not produce flax are represented by a dearth of flax mills. One apparent anomaly exists in the south Dartrey area where there is only one scutching mill. However, this reflects the early emergence of Cootehill as the major marketing centre for flax from the Dartrey area.⁷⁵ In 1800 Coote recorded that the following transactions took place in the linen market: Monaghan £4,000, Ballybay £1,500, Clones £700 and Castleblayney £500. Cootehill, he stated, had a much bigger market.⁷⁶ But these figures, in turn, must be viewed in relation to a figure of £5,000 for Armagh.⁷⁷

A further indication of the regional dependence upon the linen industry within county Monaghan is the flax production figures. Here again, the regional nature of the county's dependence upon the industry is indicated. The production of flax for use in linen production tied the county's population still further to the fluctuations in the linen market. Figure 1.9 indicates the extent of flax production as plotted against each one hundred acres of improved land.

As might be expected, the area of the Monaghan corridor was the largest flax producing region within the county. But further, the greatest

74 In Figure 1.8 there are only three flax mills in south-east Monaghan, principally Farney barony; there is a cluster around north-west Farney and Cremorne which testifies to the importance of home spinning in these areas.

75 Spinners carried their wares up to ten miles to the mills, so the hinterlands of the various mills gives a clear indication of the diffusion of the industry into the poorer areas of the county.

76 Charles Coote, A Statistical Survey of the County of Monaghan, (Dublin, 1801), p 170.

77 Duffy, Landholding in County Monaghan, p 104.

concentration of flax production was in south Dartrey where the cottier population was also heavily involved in the industry. North-west Farney and eastern Cremorne, two areas where the home spinning of flax had diffused to in the nineteenth century, were at least not solely dependent upon the flax production. In south Dartrey and south-west Monaghan baronies the linen industry had become all-pervasive. It had affected every aspect of the economy and if the linen industry was to fail it would be most severely felt in those areas.

Apart from augmenting the familial incomes of many thousands of Monaghan people, the growth of the linen industry also had the effect of greatly increasing the population in rural areas. It facilitated subletting and subdivision because it gave the young a greater potential for maintaining a family at an earlier age. For the first time, farms of less than eight acres of unimproved land could maintain a family of much larger proportions than previously. And just as the existence of a viable linen industry helped to increase the population, so too, did an enlarged population facilitate the spread of the industry.⁷⁸ This population increase, from an estimated total of 4,753,000 persons in 1791⁷⁹ to 6,801,827 in 1821 (a rate of 42%) was bound to eventually reach a saturation point. In the northern counties the linen manufacture was one of the principal reasons for the great increase.⁸⁰ Indeed,

Even by 1841, there were considerable numbers engaged in spinning, but it was mainly the young people who had married in the relatively prosperous years of the linen industry, in the first two decades of the nineteenth century, who played no small part in populating the high density townlands of 1841.

78 Michael Drake, 'Population Growth and the Irish Economy,' in, L M Cullen, ed, The Formation of the Irish Economy, (Cork, 1976), p69. Also, Brian O'Mordha, 'The Greville Papers. A Cavan Estate on the Eve of the Famine', Breifne, Vol I, No 3, (1960), p 269.

79 This figure is estimated by K H Connell, The Population of Ireland, (Oxford, 1950), p 25, and cited in Vaughan, Irish Statistics, p 2. The 1821 figure comes from Ibid, p 3.

80 Population increase in Ireland has been plotted above, and we shall return to the increase in Monaghan's population below, see pp

81 W H Crawford, 'Economy and Society in South Ulster in the Eighteenth Century,' Clogher Record, Vol VIII, No 3, (1975), p 256.

And this new and economically less viable population looked upon the land as but the provider of enough potatoes to keep alive, whereas the industry was the cash crop. The Devon Commission heard evidence that the failure of the linen industry had forced the small farmer to pay attention to the cultivation of the land which had previously been but a secondary consideration.⁸²

Naturally, any depression within the linen industry would have a disastrous effect upon large segments of Monaghan's population. As the industry had intensified after 1800, it helped to bolster up a rural society which was rapidly expanding at its base.⁸³ Sub-division was particularly acute along the west coast in counties Galway, Clare, Mayo and Donegal. However, this trend was also accentuated in south Ulster, only here the openings for linen related labour ameliorated the position of the cottier class to some extent. The spinning of yarn and its weaving into cloth was the one prop which the cottier had to help him to survive. With its removal, a large section of the population of Ulster, especially in the south of the province, would be faced with destitution.

A further harbinger of disaster was the nature of the linen produced in the Monaghan area. Whereas the finer linen made in the Lagan triangle and in the south Derry area tended to be finer and more costly (with a greater profit margin for all concerned in the manufacturing process), in Cavan/Monaghan the trade was almost exclusively that of coarse yard wides and stout 'Armaghs.' On these, the degree of profit was less for the middle-man farmers and they consequently reduced the money they paid for the coarse linen and increased the price they charged for yarn. The linen economy, then, was in a much more marginal position than was that of the other parts of Ulster. And this marginality was not helped by

⁸² Devon Commission, Pt I, p 895, cited in Duffy, Population and Landholding in Monaghan, p 103. This point is also made by Crawford, 'The Rise of The Linen Industry,' in L M Cullen, ed, The Formation of the Irish Economy, (Cork, 1976), p 32.

⁸³ According to the Census of 1841, 70% of the rural population of Ireland lived upon farms of five acres or less. For a discussion of the increase in the number of holdings in Ireland in this category, see, L M Cullen, An Economic History of Ireland, pp 109-113.

the imperfections within the craft produce. For example, during the year 1816 there were reports of sheetings being brought to Cootehill market, "in a very irregular condition, many of them had bad ends; of unequal fineness throughout, and all of them varied in length and breadth."⁸⁴ One London factor warned that competition from Yorkshire and Lancashire would displace Cootehill sheetings upon the English market unless quality improved. At Ballibay (sic) irregularities of jobbers and sealmasters⁸⁵ were complained of, and there were allegations "that the flax was brought to market in an unclean and consequently unmerchantable condition."⁸⁶ Similar complaints were expressed about the Monaghan town and Enniskillen markets.

After the end of the Napoleonic Wars the linen industry in Ireland suffered a minor recession. However, with the introduction of the new mechanical spinning machines in the first two decades of the century, the hand spinning industry was destroyed. This forced the cottiers and others involved within the domestic segment of the industry to look towards the handloom weavers. Where once a small cottier fed his family with a rood of potatoes, and augmented his earnings with his own wage from handloom weaving and from his wife's hand spinning, he was now forced to rely upon his own wages entirely. However, his job was also quickly placed in jeopardy. In 1825 a spinning machine was invented which could spin linen; this had the effect of aiding the industry but of making domestic spinning less feasible for many of the home-weavers.⁸⁷ This is borne out by the fact that the provincial linen towns ceased to grow at the start of the nineteenth century in certain areas. Belfast continued its rapid growth from 18,320 in 1791 to 37,277 in 1821, and by 1841, just prior to the outbreak of the Famine, the population of the city had reached 75,308. A more modest growth was seen in Derry city,

84 F W Smith, The Irish Linen Trade Hand Book and Directory, (Belfast, 1876), pp 62-63.

85 In other words, lengths of cloth were being stamped and certified as being longer than they actually were.

86 Smith, The Irish Linen Directory, p 63.

87 Under pressure from English and Scottish manufacturers, Irish linen producers had no alternative but to introduce the new machines. This they did in the areas of largest population which ensured the disappearance of home spinning by 1841. Cullen, Formation of the Irish Economy, p 120.

Dungannon, Coleraine and the linen towns of Armagh, Down and Antrim, but in Longford, Cavan and Monaghan, there was no growth in population at all.⁸⁸

The final blow to the domestic industry in rural west Ulster came with the introduction of the power loom. Just as the wet spinning process undermined and finally destroyed the domestic spinning in areas such as Monaghan, the introduction of the power loom had a similar effect upon the hand weaving which had proved essential for the well-being of the population. The industry shifted to the north-east where the decade 1825-1835 saw the redirection of much of the investment in the new cotton mills of Belfast towards linen.⁸⁹ By 1835 there were ten new linen mills and this number had grown to sixty-eight in the whole of Ireland by 1838. This meant that by the time that weaving mills were being built, from 1840 onwards, ~~that~~ it would have been an added unnecessary expense to locate them any distance from where the yarn was spun. Cootehill, and to a lesser extent, Monaghan town, Ballybay and Killeshandra had been important centres within the industry, but their major focus had been bleach greens for the brown linen which was produced locally. With the movement towards the major centres of population, the production of brown linen in south Ulster dropped dramatically. An indication of the decline in the production of brown linen in the area is indicated in Table 1.5, It is an estimate of the annual sales in the Ulster brown linen markets.⁹⁰

88 Ibid, p 122.

89 F Geary, 'The Rise and Fall of the Belfast Cotton Industry: Some Problems,' Irish Economic and Social History, Vol VIII, (1981), pp 48-49.

90 Table 1.5 is taken, in abbreviated form, from W H Crawford, Domestic Industry in Ireland, Appendix 5, pp 78-80.

TABLE 1.5

	1783	1803	1819	1820
<u>County Antrim</u>				
Ballymena	52,000	62,400	130,000	55,562
Belfast	52,000	156,000	208,000	82,300
Lisburn	104,000	145,600	260,000	84,727
<u>County Armagh</u>				
Armagh	93,600	208,000	197,600	358,150
Keady	7,800	-	-	-
Lurgan	130,000	130,000	96,200	139,976
Tanderagee	26,000	88,400	52,000	56,062
<u>County Cavan</u>				
Ballynagh	-	31,200	44,200	16,256
Cootehill	52,000	114,400	52,000	55,762
Killeshandra	15,600	31,200	20,800	15,024
<u>County Down</u>				
Banbridge	26,000	52,000	53,976	62,660
Downpatrick	15,600	78,000	39,000	4,500
Newry	52,000	78,000	47,944	70,500
<u>County Londonderry</u>				
Coleraine	3,900	31,200	44,200	41,184
Londonderry	52,000	104,000	58,760	94,630
Magherafelt	7,200	14,400	19,200	19,033
Moneymore	12,000	18,000	30,000	19,171
<u>County Monaghan</u>				
Ballybay	26,000	46,800	62,400	46,031
Castleblayney	10,400	26,000	44,200	26,250
Clones	31,200	20,800	33,800	13,372
Monaghan	36,400	57,200	52,000	38,927
<u>County Tyrone</u>				
Aughnacloy	26,000	41,600	-	4,618
Dungannon	78,000	182,000	208,000	81,295
Newtownstewart	31,200	52,000	20,800	32,379
Omagh	-	-	47,840	51,502
Stewartstown	41,600	52,000	32,760	26,831
Strabane	36,400	78,000	123,760	77,502

The manufacture of brown linen, undertaken at home and widespread throughout the province, showed a marked increase between 1783 and 1803. In the twenty-seven market towns selected, a total of 1,018,900 bales were sold during the first period, whereas twenty years later, the total was 1,899,200. The year 1816 recorded 1,961,240 and four years later this had fallen to 1,574,204 bales. The 1820 figure indicates the beginning of the decline in the industry, and it continued downhill in the domestic hand loom areas for some time. The figures for county Cavan for the years 1816 and 1820 show a rapid falling off in brown linen sold at the markets at Ballynagh and Killeshandra whilst the Cootehill figures show a slight increase. This suggests a dropping off in the trade in the more westerly parts of the county, whilst Cootehill took up very little surplus; the suggestion being that much of the western trade had disappeared altogether. This is underlined by the decline in brown linen marketed at the small centres in Donegal (not included in Table 1.5). Similarly, county Tyrone's markets saw very large declines, especially after 1816. Excluding Aughnacloy for which there is no figure for 1816, the other Tyrone centres recorded 4333,160 bales sold in the first year and only 269,509 in the second. This is a decline of 37.78%, and this figure would be larger if the figures were available for Aughnacloy market. Its sales plummeted from 41,600 in 1803 to 4,618 in 1820. This suggests the rapid decline in the production of brown linen in north Monaghan as each area drew from roughly a ten mile radius.

The markets in Monaghan county experienced a decline from 1816 to 1820 of 67,820 bales or 35.25%. Clones saw a drastic reduction in brown linen sold, as did the county town. Castleblayney evinced a similar stagnation. The fall-off in Ballybay was not so marked, although here, too, there was a noticeable decrease. The figures for county Antrim show a similar decline but at least here, the conversion of many mills in Lisburn and Belfast to cotton spinning would take up some of the slack; this was little consolation for the handloom weavers in the Belfast hinterland.⁹¹ Londonderry county was more fortunate because of the accessibility of two ports, Derry city and Coleraine, but Moneymore in south Derry was less fortunate. Similar results are seen throughout

⁹¹ Geary, The Rise and Fall of the Belfast Cotton Industry, p 35. Table 1 shows increase in flax mills in Belfast taking up some of the surplus workforce after 1828.

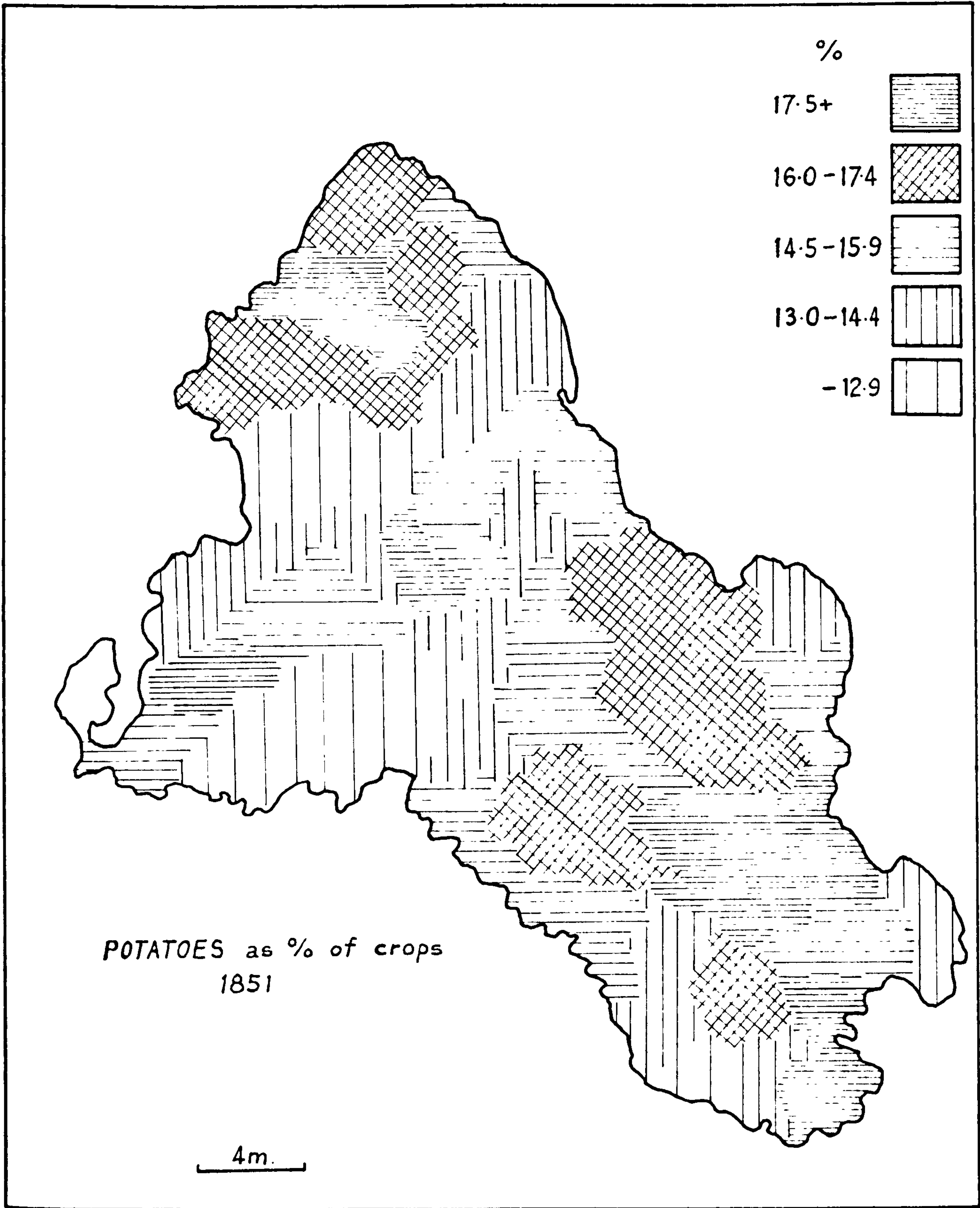


Fig. 1. 10

Source - Duffy Landholding in Co Monaghan Fig 35

the rest of the Ulster counties. The more marginal linen workers in the southern and western segments of the province were the first to suffer, but the overwhelming impression is one of decline and decay. From 1820 onwards, the position of the cottier class was deteriorating as the domestic linen industry died out. This was especially true of the spinners. The Famine would cause still further havoc upon the industry. The 1841 Census listed 21,400 'Unspecified Spinners' in county Monaghan; by 1851 this number had fallen to 1,329. Undoubtedly these 'Unspecified Spinners' were mainly involved in the linen industry. The total number of weavers fell from 3,341 to 1,340, while flax spinners decreased from 3,157 to 638.⁹²

THE POTATO

With such a large class attempting to make ends meet, there was an early dependence upon the potato. Initially, counties Sligo and Mayo were the main suppliers of both grain and potatoes to the industrialised counties of the north. However, as the involvement in the linen industry increased, the dependence upon potatoes in Ulster became much greater. As early as the 1770s the gaelic poet Uilliam O Maoil Chiarain noted the contrast between the prosperous grain farmers of north Meath, who were already supplementing their cereal trade with beef production, and the poverty of the inhabitants of Monaghan and south Armagh.

The cabins one sees on the sides of the hills are the most miserable huts I ever saw, built with sods and turf, no chimney, the door made of a hurdle, the smoke goes all out of the door, the cocks and hens, pigs, goats and if perchance they have a cow, inhabit the same dwelling. ⁹³

Such poverty led inexorably towards dependence upon the potato, and it was to increase during the next fifty years, so that it has been estimated that between 30% and 40% of the population of the county of Monaghan was entirely, or almost entirely, dependent upon the potato.⁹⁴

⁹² Duffy, Landholding in County Monaghan, p 145, n 47.

⁹³ Cited in L M Cullen, An Economic History of Ireland since 1660, (London, 1972), p 80.

⁹⁴ This claim is made by Livingston, The Monaghan Story, p 217. This would make Monaghan fairly typical of the whole of Ireland for which Gearoid O Tuathaigh claims one-third of the population was dependent upon the potato; see, Ireland before the Famine 1798-1848, p 203.

The spread of potato production within the county is indicative of this, and Figure 1.10 shows the potato crop as a percentage of the total crops in 1851. The two baronies in the east of the county, Cremorne and Farney, were the most dependent upon the potato. If potato production is compared with that of flax mills in Figure 1.8, then a marked correspondence emerges between the hand spinning areas of west Farney and north Cremorne, and potato dependence. The ready accessibility of the potato coupled with the hand spinning industry ensured that while both lasted, an abnormally large population could exist with relative ease.⁹⁵ The large population, had, in the expanding years of the linen industry, at the beginning of the century, seen the land as but a place for accommodation. One agent upon a Cavan estate noted that around 1815, each tenant had two or three looms upon which he produced about ten shillings worth of linen a week.⁹⁶ The loss of such an income placed even greater reliance upon the potato. The loss of linen had removed one prop from the society, the Great Famine would remove the other.

With the loss of the financial boon of linen industry related earnings, partial failures of crops, as in 1817 and 1822, caused considerable hardship. This was much greater in the south and west of the island, than in Ulster. In 1831 there was another localised famine, this time in Mayo, whilst 1836 saw Donegal similarly afflicted. Although famine anywhere in the country would have an effect upon the whole of the island, and conditions in Ulster were primitive enough in any case,⁹⁷ still the province managed to avoid the worst ravages of famine

⁹⁵ There is much discussion amongst economic historians as to whether the potato dependence was a cause or an effect of population increase. See, for example, L M Cullen, 'Irish History Without the Potato,' Past and Present, (July, 1968), pp 72-83, and Joel Mokyr, 'Irish History with the Potato,' Irish Economic and Social History, Vol VIII (1981), pp 8-29.

⁹⁶ Brian O Mordha, 'Cavan Estate on the Eve of the Famine,' Breifne, Vol I, No 3, (1960), p 268.

⁹⁷ It has often been recognised that a potato diet supplemented with one pint of milk daily, supplies all the body's nutritional needs. However, by the late 1820s, milk was becoming to be regarded by the peasantry, as a luxury.

which had broken out in the west, (a localised famine in Donegal in 1836 was the only exception). Nor did its population increase as rapidly as in Munster and Connacht. Between the Censuses of 1821 and 1831, Connacht's population rose by 21.05%, Munster by 15.06%, that of Leinster by 8.66% and Ulster by 14.42%. The following decade the increases were more moderate; Connacht 5.58%, Munster 7.59%, Ulster 4.36% and Leinster 3.35%. But if Munster and Ulster can be seen as occupying a middle ground between the large increase in the population of Connacht between 1821 and 1831, and of Leinster, sight must not be lost of the fact that in actual numbers, Ulster gained 288,128 extra mouths to feed during that decade. Over the twenty years to 1841, Ulster's population increased by 387,879 people, or 19.4%.

What was unusual, and consequently disastrous, about the famine which affected Ireland in the middle of the nineteenth century was that the potato blight struck the crop throughout the entire island, and it reoccurred for the best part of six years. A long wet spell in the summer of 1845 may well have been a contributory factor to the virulence of the blight which struck the poor regions of the south-west in August. Immediately, the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel, set up a committee of inquiry to search for a remedy for the blight, and in addition, he bought £100,000 worth of Indian corn in America to be transported to Cork for distribution amongst the destitute. During the first year of the famine, the activities of the government proved to be, on the whole, a success.⁹⁸ However, when the fungus once again attacked the potato crop in 1846, widespread starvation was the result. In addition to the Indian corn purchase, the government expended around £365,000 during 1845-1846 and afforded as much again in loans. The deprivation in Ireland may well have contributed to Peel's determination to repeal the Corn Laws upon imported grain which he subsequently did, splitting his party and losing for himself the premiership of the country in the process. The partial potato failure, affecting about

⁹⁸ J C Beckett, The Making of Modern Ireland, 1603-1923, (London, 1973), p 388. In addition, O Tuathaigh, Ireland before the Famine, R Dudley Edwards and T Desmond Williams, The Great Famine, (Dublin, 1956), E R R Green, 'The Great Famine (1845-1850)', in Moody and Martin eds, The Course of Irish History, (Cork, 1967), pp 263-274 et al, have gone towards this piece on the famine.

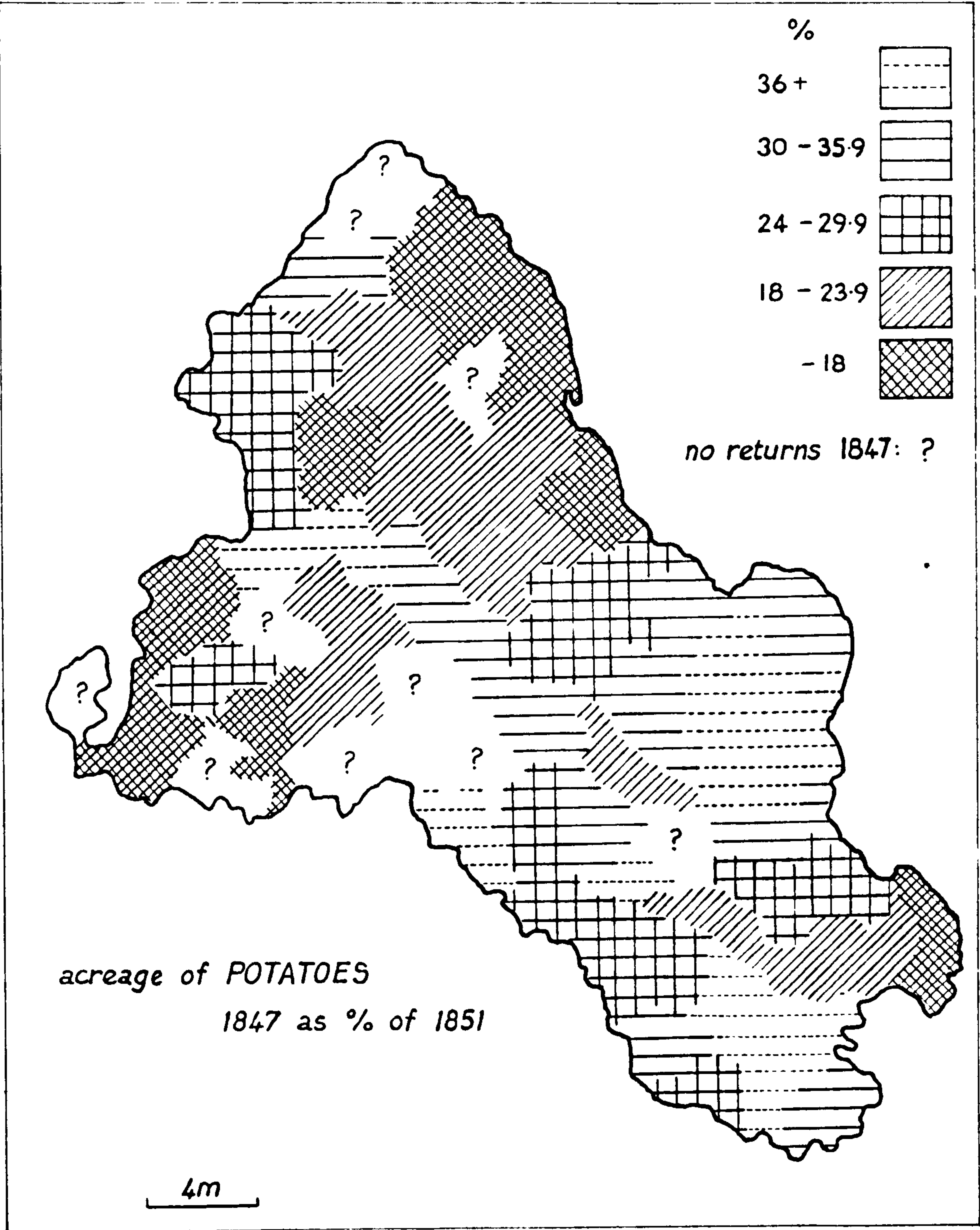


Fig. 1. 11

Source.- Duffy Landholding in Co Monaghan Fig 6 2

half of the crop had been dealt with by Peel's administration effectively.

The new government under Lord John Russell insisted on the laissez-faire economic policies which were current at the time. They thus fell back upon a policy of promoting relief works through local Boards of Work in the affected areas, so as to generate enough cash to let the market take care of the problem. This new policy was grossly insufficient, and even it was handicapped by the government's refusal to meet half of the cost. There had been a complete failure of the crop in 1846 and the winter of that year was the coldest and longest in living memory. The administration's stance underestimated the extent of Irish distress, and by 1847 over 700,000 people were involved in relief labour. A second option was then tried, that of distributing food through the local Poor Law Guardians. The idea was that the burden of providing for the poor would fall upon those whom the Whigs believed to be primarily responsible - the landlords. They, however, lessened the burden of the rates upon their estates by evicting numbers of tenants, which further exacerbated the problem. By August 1847 when the potato crop mostly escaped the rot, 3,000,000 people were being fed daily at public expense. This accounts for roughly 40% of the entire population.⁹⁹ 'Black '47' was not the end of the famine. The following year was almost as bad, but by 1849 the effect of the famine was beginning to ease. It would be 1852 before Ireland could be properly described as famine free.

We have already noted in Figure 1.10 the potato growing areas of county Monaghan in 1851. At this time, with the famine almost over, the potato production was down from its pre-famine level. However, some estimate has to be made as to what extent of the crop suffered from the blight. Duffy has estimated the percentage of arable land sown in potatoes in the years 1847 and 1851 and his findings, taken from the first enumeration of crops, indicate the extent and intensity of potato blight in the county. These are reproduced in map form in Figure 1.11.

The area around Scotstown had a potato acreage in 1847 of a mere 14.6% of the 1851 figure which suggests an alarming paucity of potatoes.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ This estimate comes from L M Cullen, Economic History of Ireland, p 132. This figure does not tell the whole story as there was a considerable number of soup kitchens run by private groups.

¹⁰⁰ The decrease may not be purely the number of potatoes which was affected by the blight. In 1846 partial failure of the crop forced many to eat some of their seed potatoes, so a smaller crop was sown.

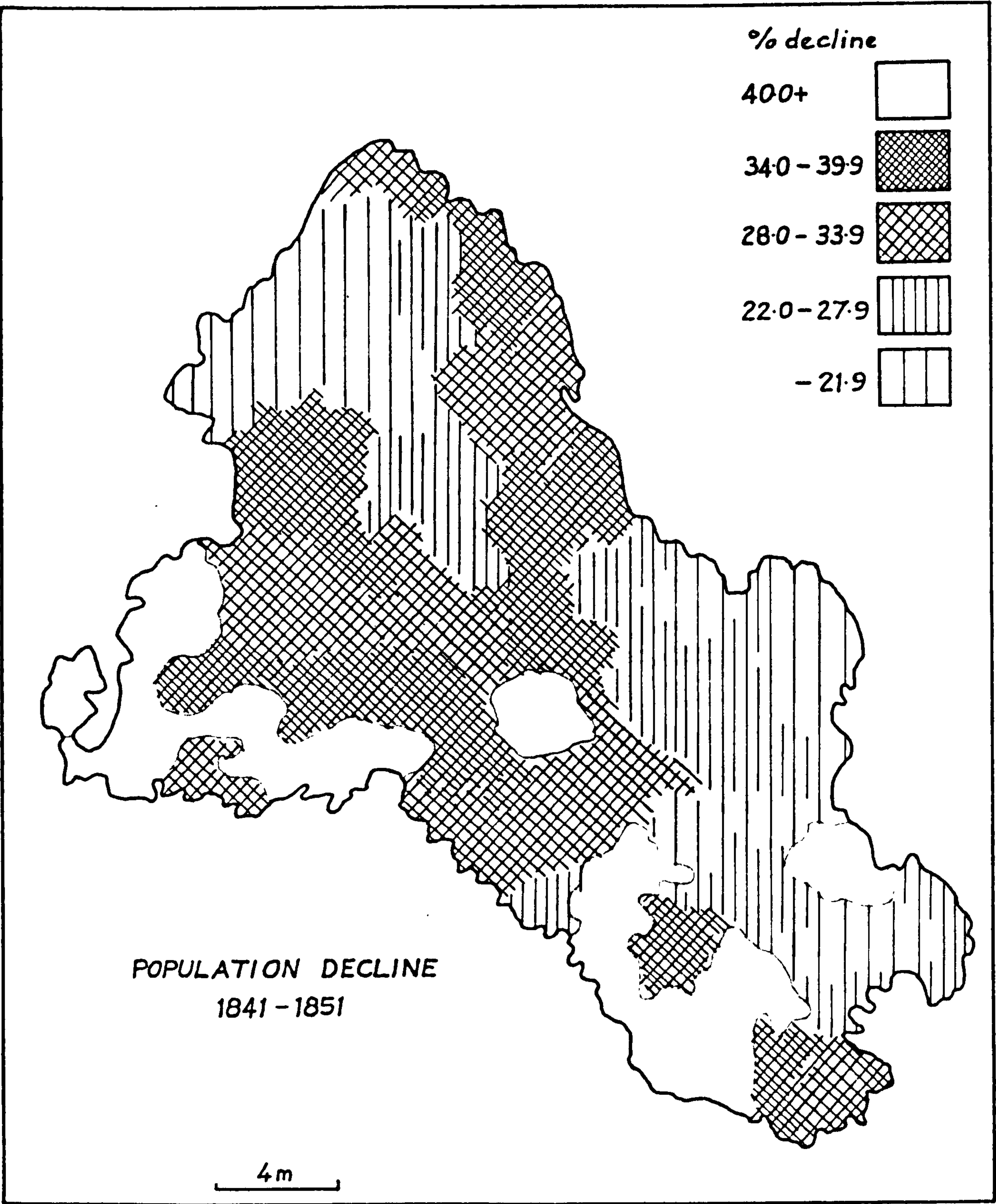


Fig. 1.12

Source:- Duffy. Landholding in Co.Monaghan. Fig.6.1.

However, in other parts of the county the 1847 figure was one-half of that of 1851 and this might reflect more the reticence of farmers to plant such an undependable crop. The largest areas of failure appear to have been in the Monaghan corridor area running from Glaslough to Smithboro. In addition, west Dartrey, west Cremorne, and parts of Farney barony were severely affected.

. . . in all these areas the 1847 crop was less than one quarter of the 1851 potato crop. In much of Clontibret and Muckno parishes, and in parts of Magheross, Killanny and Magheracloone, the crop varied from one third to one half of the 1851 acreage. 101

In human terms, the county of Monaghan suffered considerably from the famine. Population loss within the several baronies of the county is recorded in Table 1.6 below.¹⁰²

Barony	1841	1851	Decline (%)
Cremorne	53,110	38,934	26.69
Dartrey	41,018	27,124	33.87
Farney	44,107	31,519	28.54
Monaghan	43,463	30,933	28.83
Trough	<u>18,709</u>	<u>13,248</u>	<u>29.19</u>
TOTAL	200,407	141,758	29.26
	<u><u> </u></u>	<u><u> </u></u>	<u><u> </u></u>

Cremorne experienced the smallest baronial decline in population in the county. By far the hardest hit was the barony of Dartrey. Trough with a small population density was quite severely affected, but in actual terms of people lost, it had a small decline. Broadly speaking, the southern and western parts of the county experienced greater declines in population than did the northern and eastern portions. These figures, however, hid the regional patterns within the county of population decrease. These have been plotted in Figure 1.12. This somewhat clarifies the position. The areas of greatest decline were in south-west Dartrey and in southern Farney and western Cremorne. In addition, the Monaghan corridor also experienced a substantial decline in population. Ironically its effect was in the linen parishes such as Ematris, Killeevan,

101 Duffy, Landholding in County Monaghan, p 256

102 Census of Ireland, 1861, Pt 1 (3-4), Ulster and Connaught, p 285.

	Arable Land		Rural		Persons per sq		Total Sq Miles		Persons per square	
	Square Miles		Population		mi Arable Land		Excluding Towns		mile of total	
	1841	1851	1841	1851	1841	1851	1841	1851	1841	1851
					Decrease				Decrease	
Monaghan	446.70	448.40	191,301	128,966	428	288	140	499.14	383	258
Ulster	5,324.28	6,241.03	2,160,698	1,749,707	406	280	126	8,541.64	253	205
								8,541.74		48

TABLE 1.7

SOURCE: Census of Ireland, 1851, General Report, p xii.

Aghabog, Drumully, Drumsnat, Tullycorbet, Aghnamullen and Ballybay which also experienced the greater decline in the potato crop and consequently in population. An examination of the inhabited houses in Aghabog and Ematris parishes between 1841 and 1861 showed that in forty-nine of the one hundred and thirty-five townlands, a decline of 56% was experienced.¹⁰³ Indeed, the linen triangle which also included the greatest proportion of Protestant farmers was worst hit. It has been suggested that the famine in Monaghan had as profound an effect upon the size of the Protestant community as their Catholic counterparts.¹⁰⁴ Due to the fact that the Census did not carry a question as to religious profession until 1861, there would be no way of checking such an assertion, except through very comprehensive church records.

We have already taken some notice of the percentage of the population which disappeared during the famine decade in Figure 1.7. However, this does not say anything about the density of population. Monaghan was in an area of high population density; county Armagh, for example, had a density of 61.3 persons per 100 acres. The figure for county Monaghan was 58.0. Counties Louth and Cavan had respectively 52.0 and 48.0 persons per 100 acres, whereas Tyrone had 34.9 and Fermanagh 31.5. Counties Meath and Westmeath had rates of 28.0 and 26.3.¹⁰⁵ This indicates that Monaghan was at the centre of the high density portion of the island; that is, the area where the north midlands region meets the drumlin belt in south Ulster. Table 1.7 (opposite) gives an indication of how Monaghan, an Ulster county, compares with the province as a whole.

Monaghan's population density in rural areas of 383 per square mile translates into a percentage of 151.38 when compared with the rest of Ulster.¹⁰⁶ That is to say, rural Monaghan was half as much again as densely populated as was rural Ulster in general.¹⁰⁷ And as the figure

103 Duffy, Landholding in County Monaghan, p 162.

104 Livingston, Monaghan Story, p 215.

105 Duffy, Landholding in County Monaghan, p 215.

106 Duffy gives a figure of 370 per square mile. The discrepancy may be explained by the fact that he does not include improved land; see, p 235, n 23.

107 So as to contrast Monaghan with the provincial whole, the Ulster figure is for nine counties. An alternative would be to give data for each county.

for Ulster includes the county of Monaghan, therefore Monaghan's population density vis-a-vis the other eight counties was slightly higher than the figures suggest. During the decade which included the Great Famine, the county's population fell by 125 persons per square mile, or 32.63%. The county's decrease in population was thus almost double that of Ulster at large. However, when the figures for arable land are compared, Monaghan's and Ulster's decreases were very similar. Here Monaghan was only 5% more densely populated than Ulster and the decrease of 140 per square mile, or 32.71% varies little from that of the province as a whole, which was 126 or 31.03%. The most obvious feature of these figures is that Monaghan lost in a similar proportion both for rural areas in general and arable land in particular - 32.71% as against 32.64%. Ulster, on the other hand, lost 18.97% in rural areas, but 31.03% when plotted against arable land. Monaghan's population decline in rural areas was widespread, whereas the figures for Ulster indicate that the province as a whole must have lost heavily in the poorer areas whereas the population upon the arable areas stayed relatively static (or replaced drift with newcomers from the more marginal farming districts).

One aspect of the Ulster figures which must be considered is that they might reflect urban overspill. The definition of urban areas in the Census was towns with a population which exceeded 2,000 people. But as Monaghan's loss of domestic spinning and weaving industries had removed the possibilities for work in the towns and villages, the famine had the effect of not only pushing the people off the land, but out of the county altogether.

Table 1.8, see over, demonstrates urban growth by Ulster county from 1841-1851.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ Census of Ireland, 1851, Vol 6 General Report, p xv. Due in part to inclusion of Carrickmacross which passed the 2,000 barrier between 1841 and 1851 Censuses; see, ibid p xiii.

TABLE 1.8

	1841	1851	Change	%
Antrim	19,836	22,860	3,024	15.25
Armagh	20,500	20,033	-467	-2.18
Belfast	75,308	100,301	24,993	33.19
Carrickfergus	3,885	3,543	-342	-8.80
Cavan	8,244	7,413	-811	-10.08
Donegal	6,426	4,889	-1,537	-23.92
Down	37,639	40,118	2,479	6.59
Fermanagh	5,686	5,949	263	4.63
Londonderry	24,552	29,654	5,102	20.78
Monaghan	9,141	12,857	3,716	40.65
Tyrone	<u>14,458</u>	<u>14,556</u>	<u>98</u>	<u>0.68</u>
ULSTER	225,675	262,173	36,498	16.17
	<u><u> </u></u>	<u><u> </u></u>	<u><u> </u></u>	<u><u> </u></u>

Having already discussed the fact that the urban areas were stagnating in county Monaghan, some explanation has to be given as to the large increase in that population as given above. A large part of the figure may be attributed to the fact that the famine drove a large number of people into the towns where they became dependent upon charity. This is reflected in Table 1.9, see over, which records the number of people in public institutions in Ulster.¹⁰⁹

109 Ibid p xxi.

Table 1.2

	<u>WORKHOUSES</u>			TOTAL	<u>HOSPITALS</u>		TOTAL	TOTAL INMATES	POP %
	M	F			M	F			
Antrim	987	1,124	2,111	7	170	135	305	2,423	1.0
Armagh	792	1,009	1,801	156	179	118	297	2,254	1.1
Belfast	819	1,026	1,845	292	172	208	380	2,517	2.5
Carrickfergus	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cavan	1,410	2,188	3,598	166	42	14	56	3,820	2.2
Donegal	1,116	1,483	2,599	205	58	36	94	2,898	1.1
Down	731	972	1,703	235	50	34	84	2,022	0.6
Fermanagh	684	899	1,583	157	106	62	168	1,908	1.6
Londonderry	811	1,044	1,855	109	186	165	351	2,315	1.2
Monaghan	1,592	2,049	3,641	167	40	29	69	3,877	2.7
Tyrone	1,232	1,672	2,904	258	53	40	93	3,255	1.3
ULSTER	10,174	13,466	23,640	1,752	1,056	841	1,897	27,289	1.4

TOTAL NUMBER OF INMATES IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS IN ULSTER, 1851.

As might be expected, Belfast, which had been inundated with paupers from the surrounding areas had a large population in its public institutions. The counties of Monaghan and Cavan, on the other hand, did not have a similarly expanding industry. Yet Monaghan had the largest percentage of its population in institutions of any county in Ulster. If no other proof was available, this fact alone would indicate the depth of suffering which Monaghan experienced. The only county which rivalled Monaghan was its near neighbour, county Cavan. In that county, for example, by May 1846 there were relief committees operating in Bailieboro, Ballyjamesduff, Shercock, Killinkere, Cavan town, Stradone and Ballyhaise. It was reported that 229 families (560 people) had flocked into the county town in search of bread, being entirely destitute.¹¹⁰ At the same time, Clones workhouse supported 6,000 people which was roughly one-third of the population of the Union.¹¹¹ Whilst Ulster had a percentage residency within institutions of 1.4%, Monaghan's figure was almost double, with Cavan not much less. And as the Ulster figure includes both Monaghan and Cavan, the figure for the rest of the province is about half of those two counties.

But the full story of despair and destitution is not reflected entirely in the number of inmates in the workhouses. In Monaghan, as with other counties, there was a reluctance to enter the workhouse.¹¹² Partly this was due to pride, and partly it resulted from the belief that once a workhouse had been entered, there was little chance of re-emerging. There was also the feeling that treatment within such establishments was not all that it should be. At an inquest in Drum on a former inmate of the auxillary workhouse there, the local doctor, John Taylor, claimed that between 200 and 300 inmates were not properly cared for.¹¹³ Numbers in Castleblayney workhouse increased from 250 in September 1846 to 1,849 by March 1849.¹¹⁴

The Great Famine was one of the great watersheds in Irish history. It had a profound effect upon the demography of the county. Although the effect of the catastrophe may well have been greater in the south and west of the island than it was in the north, it has been demonstrated

110 Rev T P Cunningham, 'The Great Famine in County Cavan,' Breifne, Vol II, No 8, pp 415-416.

111 Duffy Landholding in Monaghan, p 252.

112 Brian O Mordha, 'The Great Famine in Monaghan; A Coroner's Account,' Clogher Record, Vol III, No 3, (1962), p 35.

113 Ibid p 37.

114 Livingston, The Monaghan Story, p 222.

that in Monaghan, as in neighbouring Cavan, the effect of famine was both far reaching and prolonged. For example, the condition of those who had remained was of a better average standard than that of the pre-famine population. This did not result from an overall improvement in living conditions, but rather, from the fact that there was a reduction of around 70% in the number of inhabited Fourth-class Houses in the county. The large reduction was partly a result of the migration of large numbers of the poorer tenants to the towns, partly to their emigration or death, and partly because when the slightly more wealthy tenants emigrated, those who were left could often move into the better accommodation recently vacated.

It would be outside our frame of reference here to give a long and detailed account of the deprivation and suffering which lies behind the figures for population reduction.¹¹⁵ The failure of the potato had the greatest effect upon those who could sustain themselves and their families least, in times of emergency. One contemporary account noted,

The squatter class of cottiers and small farmers could not live in this land without the potato; and now, that God, the all-wise and all-powerful ruler of the earth, has stopped the growth of ignorance and crime, by suspending for a time the laws of vegetable life, and the potato will no longer grow to feed an uneducated and wicked population, we must be content with the wise arrangement of Providence, and adopt our course of action to the altered circumstances of society.¹¹⁶

And whilst it was easier for him, a cleric with a fixed income, to look at the famine as God's work (albeit in mysterious ways undertaken), the need to explain away the suffering, had to be met. For some Irishmen, the path was to blame the entire episode upon foreign domination, and the famine became recognised as a dastardly English plot. But it was, in any case, an episode in Irish history which has left an indelible mark upon Irish history.

¹¹⁵ Brian O Mordha, 'The Great Famine in Monaghan (Contd)', Clogher Record, Vol IV, No 3, (1962) pp 175-186, gives frequent reference to starvation in the county.

¹¹⁶ A Looker-On, The Highlands of Cavan, (Belfast, 1856), pp 18-19.

There was little that the landlords could do in the face of the famine. They were not equipped to deal with such widespread poverty, even if they wished.¹¹⁷ Clearly, many of the landlords were not the most humane individuals in Ireland, but the image of an alien sitting in a large mansion gloating over the demise of the 'mere Irish' has been discredited for some time. At the outset, we must differentiate between the resident and absentee landowners. In those parts of the island, noticeably the west, where there was a large instance of absenteeism amongst landlords, the subsequent mismanagement of the estates exacerbated the situation.

The larger Monaghan estates were on the whole, owned by resident landlords. The estates of one thousand to two thousand acres were evenly divided between resident and non-resident owners. The smaller estates were often speculator properties, and were run by agents for landlords who were only interested in maximised rent tolls. On the other hand, the Barrett-Lennard estate outside Clones was recognised as one of the most liberally managed estates in the county and the family did not even have a residence in Ireland. Similarly, the Cremorne estate was thought to be very well run and it was not until well into the nineteenth century that the Dawson family took up residence in Ireland.

Tenancy upon the estates slumped drastically during the famine years. For many, the pressures of disease and starvation were too much. For others, eviction and emigration were the causes of relocation. The 'Gregory Clause' which stated that anyone holding over one-quarter of an acre of land was ineligible for poor relief, enticed many to give up their cottier holdings and enter the workhouse. Another legal proviso, that of making the landlord responsible for the poor rates of all those who rented farms valued at less than four pounds, induced many landlords to evict those tenants who fell into this category. The threat of eviction, whether real or imagined, led to an upsurge in agrarian crime. However, it is generally accepted that eviction was fairly rare in Ulster during the famine.

EVICTIONS

Figures for the number of evictions in Ireland are only available from 1849. As would be expected, the years 1849-1853 when the Great

¹¹⁷ Attention has already been given to the efforts of the government, above pp35-6 and of population reduction, see Tables 1.3 and 1.4.

TABLE 1.10 NUMBER OF FAMILIES EVICTED DURING 1849-1853 BY PROVINCE

Source: Return of Evictions, 1849-1882, HC 1881 (185) LXXVII, 725.

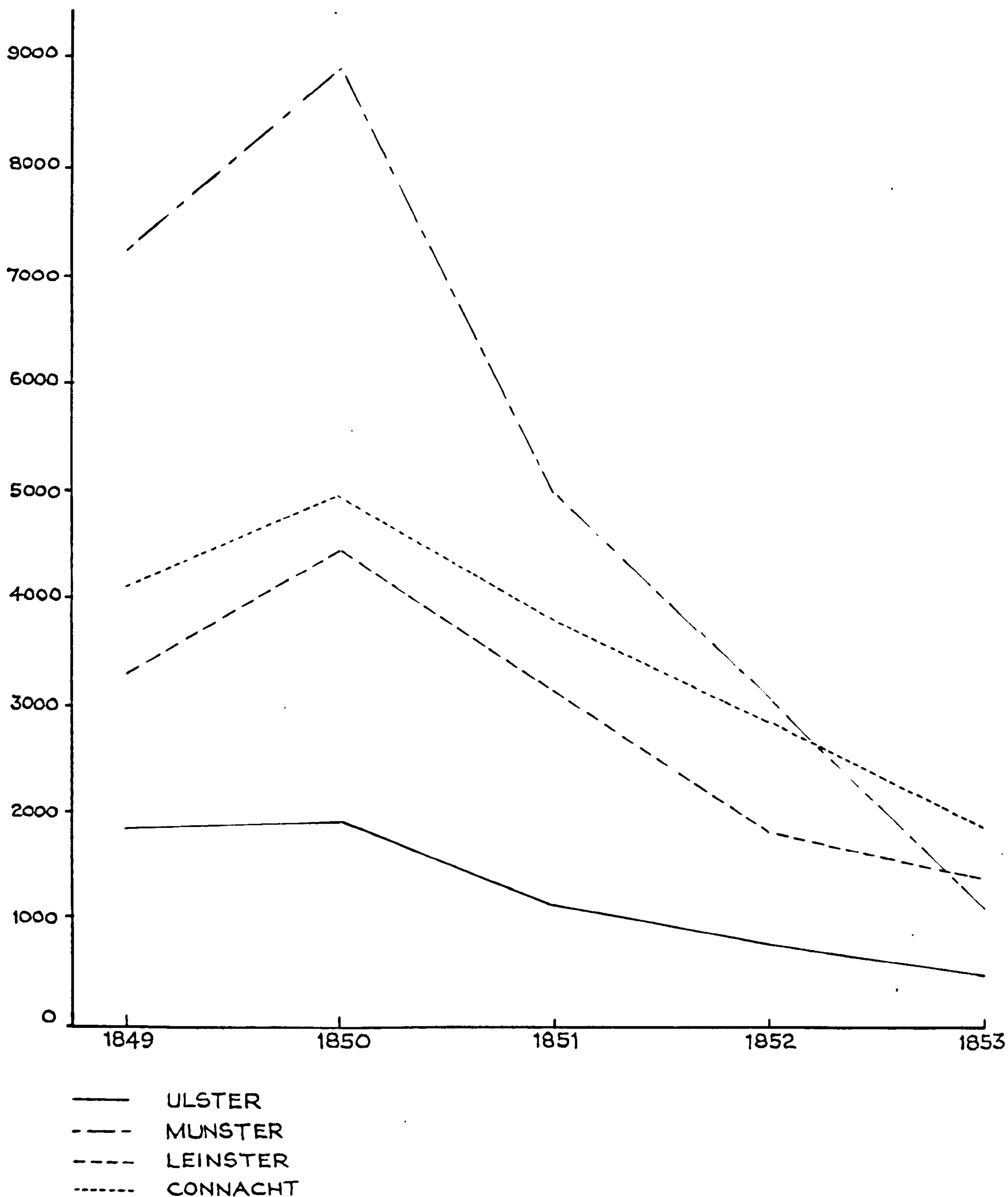


TABLE 1.11 NUMBER OF FAMILIES EVICTED DURING 1849-1853 BY ULSTER COUNTY

Source: Return of Evictions, 1849-1882, HC 1881 (185) LXXVII 725.

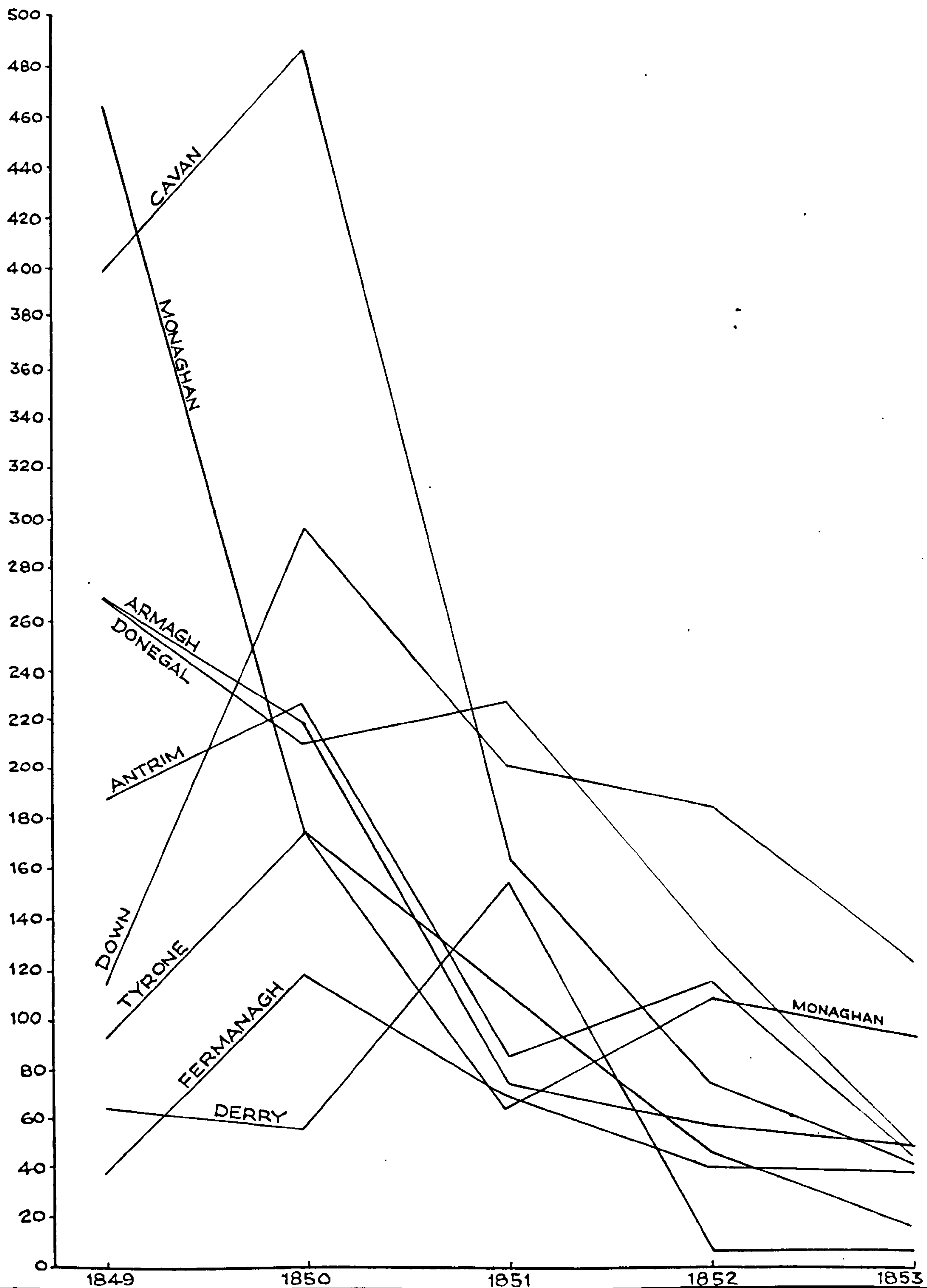
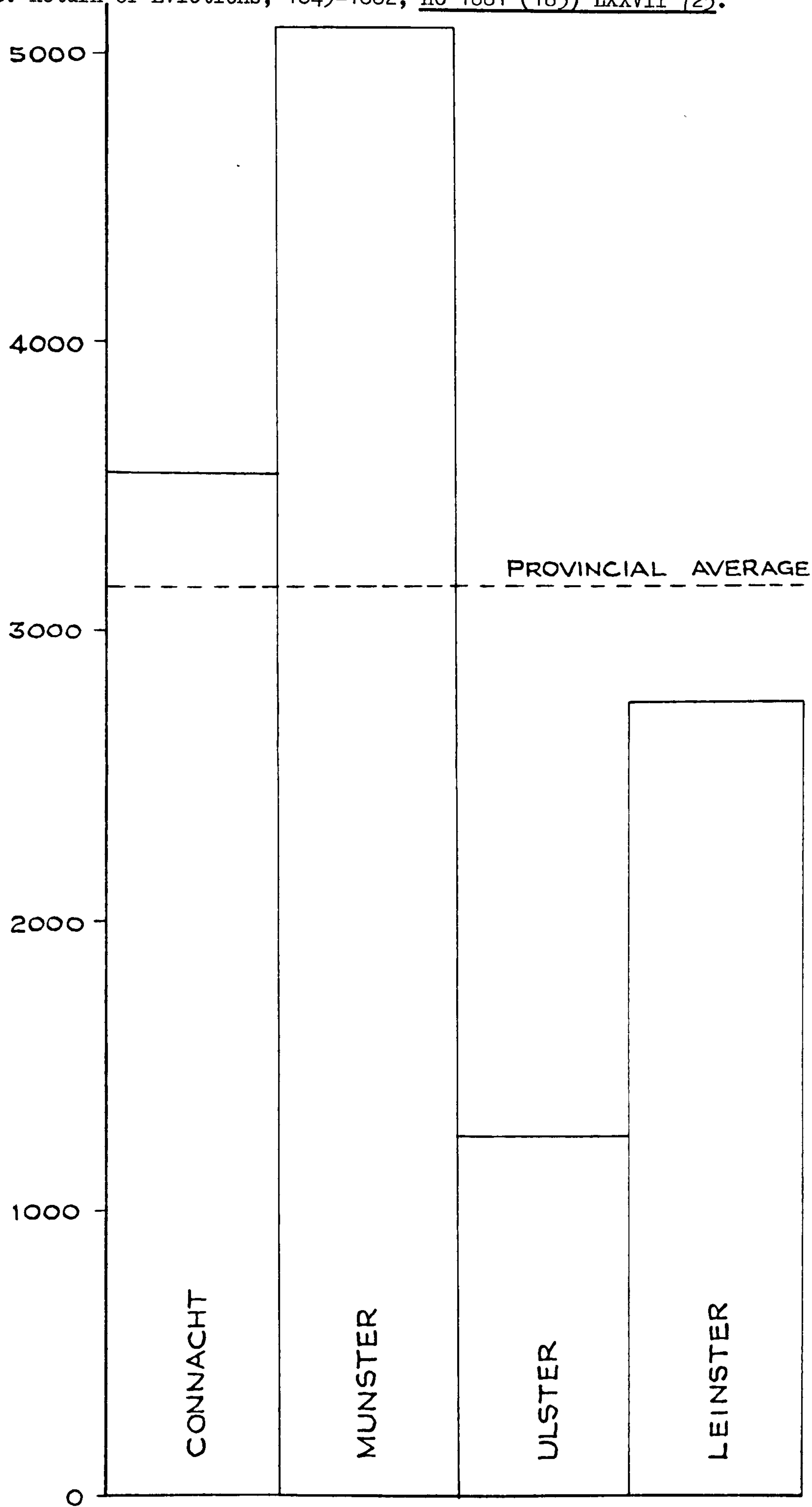


TABLE 1.12 ANNUAL AVERAGE NUMBER OF FAMILIES EVICTED DURING 1849-1882
Source: Return of Evictions, 1849-1882, HC 1881 (185) LXXVII 725.



Famine was at its height, show a large number of evictions. In Ireland as a whole, the number of evictions for 1849 was 16,686 families. This rose to 19,949 in 1850 before falling rapidly away. In 1851, 13,197 families were evicted, and this dropped to 8,591 in the following year, and 4,833 in 1853.

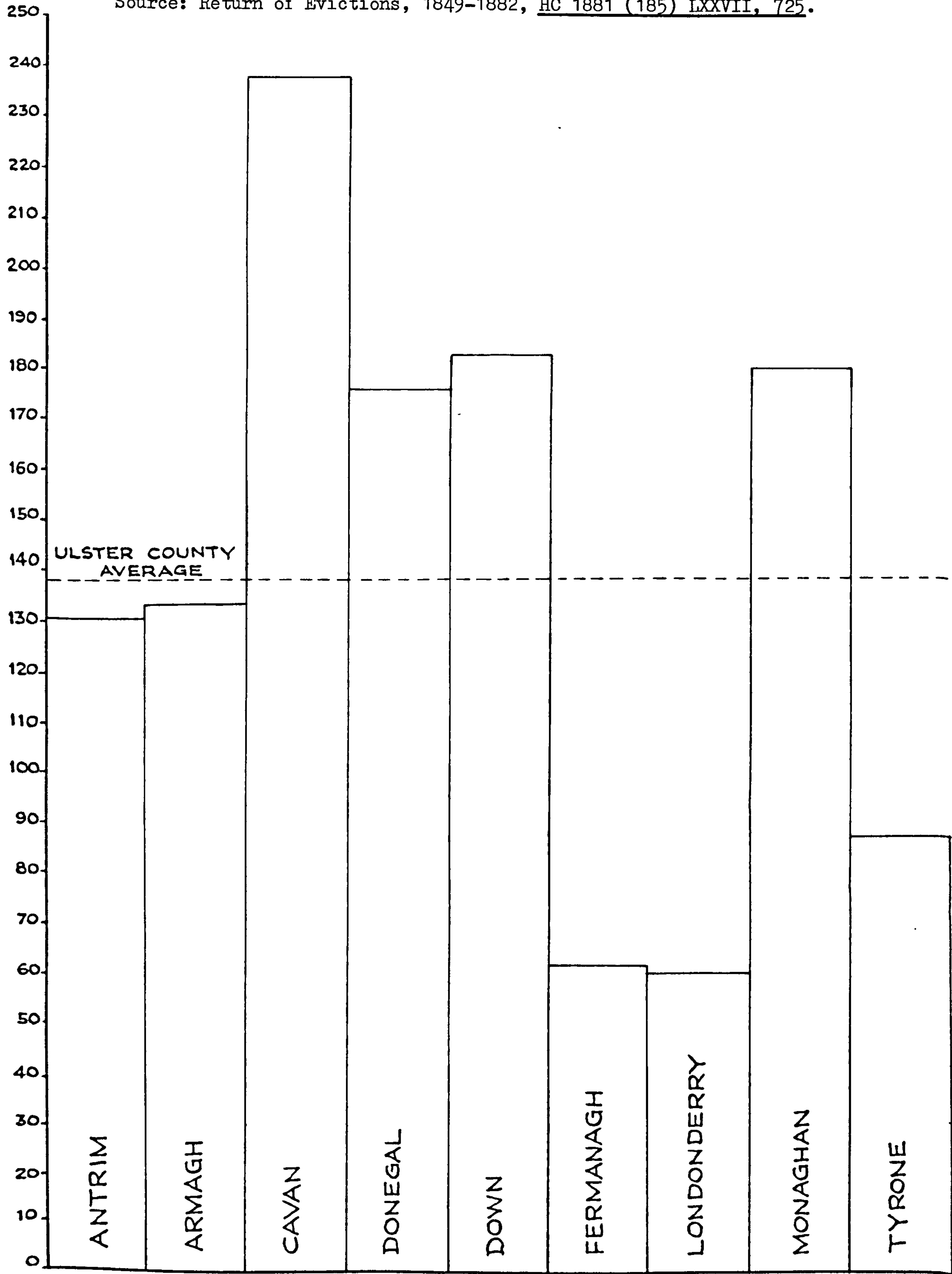
The following tables (see opposite) indicate the instances of eviction during this five-year period for Ireland, the province of Ulster and the county of Monaghan.

If the number of evictions can be utilised as a pointer to the severity of famine and the level of poverty amongst the peasantry, Ulster can be clearly seen to have been the least affected province in Ireland. In fact, Table 1.10 may indicate the existence of tenant right in Ulster more than a lack of poverty. Evictions will be discussed at the conclusion of this section.

Just as there was a marked difference in the volume of evictions in each province, so, too, was there a varied incidence between counties; Table 1.11 gives the number of families evicted in each Ulster county during the period of the famine. The most striking feature of the table is the erratic manner in which the evictions took place during this period. This reflects the independent activities of different landlords. Almost all tenants during this period were tenants at will and as the hardship of famine struck the tenantry, or perhaps more importantly, their landlords, the instance of evictions increased. A more easily understood method of gauging the eviction rate in Ulster during this period is contained in Table 1.12. This indicates the annual average number of families evicted in each province during the famine period. This shows quite dramatically the more favourable position of Ulster. And if it is correct, as has often been suggested, that the number of agrarian outrages, level of evictions and social deprivation are all linked, then Ulster must have been a vastly more comfortable place to live in during the famine. Ulster tenant farmers experienced less than one-quarter of the eviction rate of their counterparts in Munster. As compared to the country as a whole, Ulster had an eviction rate of 39.3% of the rest of the country. As compared to the other three provinces, Ulster experienced 32.7% of the average of her southern neighbours. All of which tends to suggest that Ulster was peaceable

TABLE 1.13 ANNUAL AVERAGE NUMBER OF FAMILIES EVICTED DURING 1849-1853
BY ULSTER COUNTY

Source: Return of Evictions, 1849-1882, HC 1881 (185) LXXVII, 725.



and content, with good relations existing between landlord and tenant.

If we can narrow to focus still further, then it will be possible to consider regional variations within each province. And as our scope is confined to Ulster, Table 1.13 depicts the yearly average number of families evicted in each Ulster county during the period 1849-1853. Just as Table 1.12 suggests the tranquility of Ulster when compared with the other three provinces, so Table 1.13 will give a similar indication for the province itself.

As might be expected, the three border counties of Donegal, Cavan and Monaghan suffered a much larger incidence of eviction than did Antrim, Armagh, Tyrone, Fermanagh and Londonderry. The most obvious anomaly was county Down which had a fractionally higher eviction rate than Donegal and Monaghan, and might not have been expected to occupy second place. As county Down suffered least the effects of the famine of all the Ulster counties, and as the mainly Protestant tenantry was supposedly more peaceable than that of the other counties of Ulster, then some further explanation of the county Down figure is required. And whilst that is not within the scope of this study, the figure for Down suggests the problem of accepting eviction as a clear indicator of famine chaos. Suffice it to say that land tenure in county Down was less secure than is frequently suggested. In any case, eviction could be carried out at the caprice of the landlords if it was to their benefit so to do.¹¹⁸

This arbitrary nature of eviction can be further evidence if one takes note of the rate for each county over a period of time. Table 1.14 (see below) gives the average number of evictions in county Monaghan over each five-year period.

¹¹⁸ There is no doubt but that eviction was regularly threatened in nineteenth-century Ireland. It was implemented much less frequently, however, than is often recognised.

It was subject to an inordinately large number of eviction processes during the decade which encompassed the famine. These peaked in the two years 1849 and 1852, when 643 of the 1,116 processes were served. A closer examination of these figures indicates that of this figure of 1,116 processes served, 657 were made at the behest of Evelyn John Shirley and his younger brother, Charles Shirley. Further, 255 of the remainder were served upon tenants of the Marquis of Bath. This gives a percentage for the two estates of 58.87% of the total on the Shirley estate, and 22.84% on the Bath estate. This is particularly significant when it is remembered that the Shirleys and the Bath family each owned one-half of the barony, and suggests that the Shirleys were, perhaps, less sympathetic to the plight of their tenants.

The Shirley family has been the target for much-warranted criticism over their actions during the famine decade. It should be noted that large numbers of the tenantry who disappeared were given aid to emigrate to America. According to the stubs of the estate emigration books, sufficient money was allowed to otherwise industrious tenants to make the journey to America. The reason behind this assisted emigration process was the fact that the Gregory clause and the requirement for the landlord to pay the rates upon all holdings valued at less than four pounds made it in the family's interest to rid the estate of as many tenants in these categories as possible. Emigration was more advantageous than simple eviction, as the unfortunate family would then enter the workhouse, the cost of which was maintained by the rates. Reverend McCollum discovered in 1850 that the cost of the rates was proving too much even for the better-off farmers. Mr Shirley himself paid between three thousand and four thousand pounds per annum in poor rates.¹¹⁹

The problem with the Shirley estate was that it had been left in the hands of agents until the Shirley family moved to the Irish property in the 1830s. There had thus been an inordinate amount of holdings subdivided, to the extent that Lord Lismore in London could write to his agent in Tipperary in 1838 when the Poor Law Act was being passed through

119 Looker-On, Highlands of Cavan, p 18.

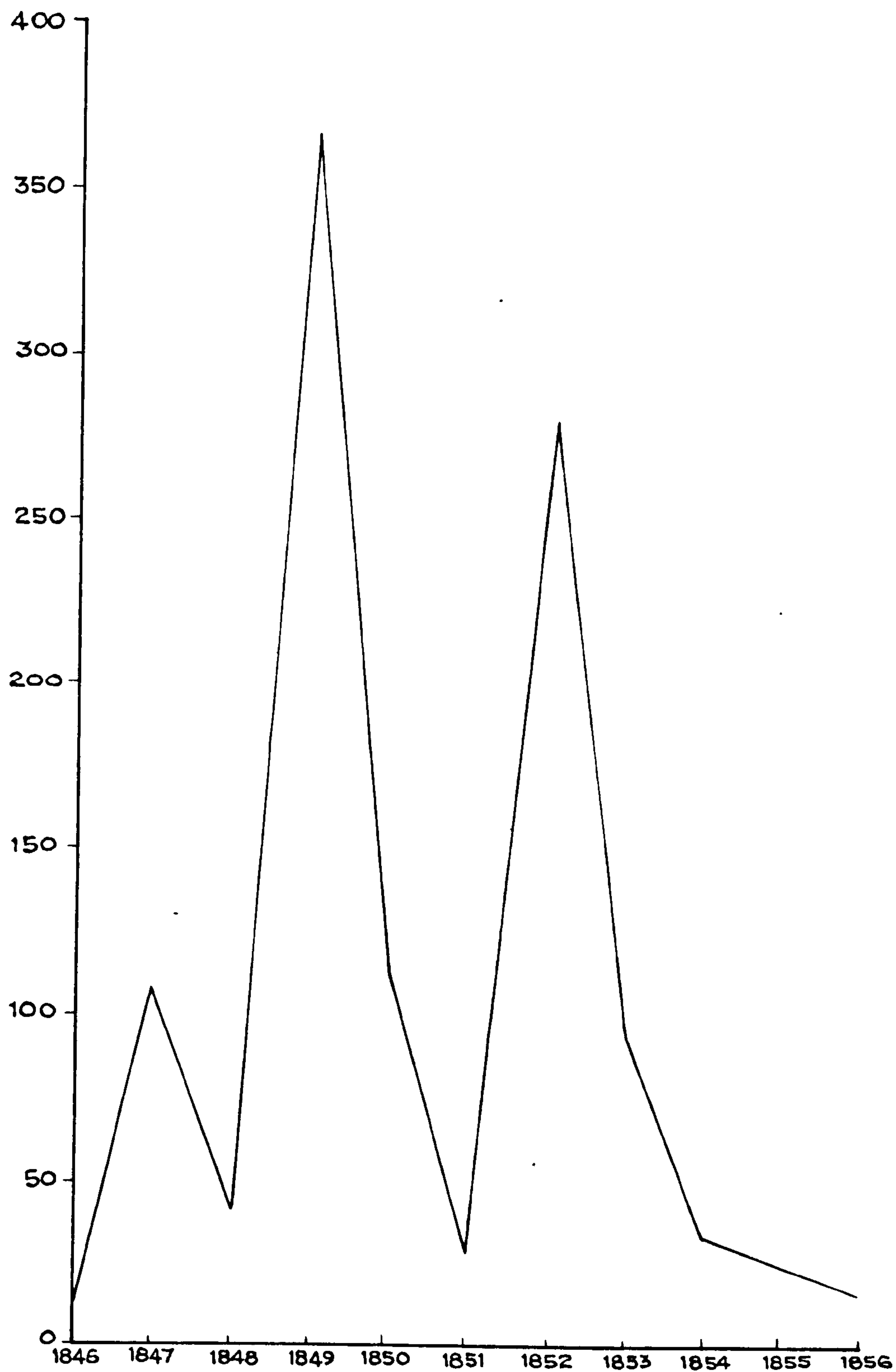
Table 1.14

<u>YEARS</u>	<u>%</u>
1849-1853	180.3
1854-1858	10.0
1859-1863	12.2
1864-1868	16.0
1869-1873	1.8
1874-1878	6.0
1879-1883	
1884-1888	

The massive decrease between the period 1849-1853 and 1854-1858 indicates not so much that the stern action of the first five years had left the tenantry cowed, but rather that the enormous agrarian upheaval of the period of the famine had given the landlords an opportunity to place their relations with their tenants upon a more advantageous footing than previously. Thus, by 1853 the need for eviction had all but disappeared throughout the whole of Ulster; and this trend is evidenced in the other three provinces. Thus Monaghan, like much of the north, gradually lost its leases. That is to say, when a lease ran out it was usual for the landlord to permit the tenant his heirs and successors to occupy the land as a tenant at will on a yearly basis. This naturally reduced the security of tenure for the tenant.

There are however, certain problems in taking the instance of evictions as a direct pointer to social upheaval and deprivation. For example, a bare figure on eviction rate in a county does not indicate how many of the families were readmitted as caretakers. Also, it does not take into consideration the fact that to remove a middle-man upon an estate it sometimes proved necessary to evict all the under-tenants in name (although they were undisturbed) and have them readmitted to their holdings with the title now held directly from the landlord. Such instances clearly do not relate to anything other than legal wranglings to be rid of an unwanted middle-man. And whilst these considerations dilute the findings based upon evictions, they do not nullify them completely. Table 1.15 (see below) reproduces the number of ejectment processes served in the barony of Farney during the period 1846-1856

TABLE 1.15 NUMBER OF EJECTMENT PROCESSES SERVED IN THE BARONY OF FARNEY, COUNTY MONAGHAN, DURING THE PERIOD 1846-1856.



Westminster,

I was told by a gentleman that upon Mr Shirley's estate in Monaghan there are over 3,000 tenants who did not pay each over £5 rent - consequently that great body would under the Poor Law as it is, be entitled to relief - Mr Shirley is an English Gentleman (?), has a large property, has been a good deal in Ireland - A man of business was sent from here to report upon the state of the property and he has recommended the formation of a sinking fund to supply the means to buy out and provide for the useless Tenantry. I may say more than useless. 120

The only recourse was to persuade many families to leave the estate. Tenant right, which had sold for up to £20 per acre at the beginning of the decade, was, by 1850, worth but a few shillings. This being the case families would not sell their interest in their holdings. What was required was an abatement in rent which Shirley only eventually agreed to in 1850. His rents were estimated to be about one-third too high due to the drop in the price of wheat (a reduction of around twenty shillings a barrel). This may have been a result of the murder of a landowner, Mr Mauleverer, near the Shirley estate in May 1850,¹²¹ and the shooting at Mr Kenny of Rocksavage, Inniskeen around the same time. Kenny reduced his rents by 20% a few days later.¹²² Bath's agent had made considerable reductions in rents in 1849 as well.

The obvious conclusion which can be drawn from the volume and distribution of evictions in Ireland during the period of the famine is that a tenant was considerably less likely to be evicted in Ulster than in any of the three southern provinces. Eviction rates peaked in each province around 1850 and gradually diminished thereafter in roughly similar proportions. The exception to this rule was the province of Munster which had almost double the rate of eviction of Connacht, its nearest challenger in 1849 and 1850, but experienced a much greater fall thereafter until the number of families evicted in Munster in 1853 was smaller than Connacht and Leinster but larger than Ulster. This can partly be explained by the population decrease which was much more

120 Cited in Duffy, Landholding in Monaghan, p 263.

121 On this episode, see W S Trench, Realities of Irish Life, (London, 1868), pp 183-184.

122 Looker-On, Highlands of Cavan, p 43.

122									
EVICTED FAMILIES 1849-53	POPULATION 1841	EVICTION RATE	POPULATION 1851	EVICTION RATE	'POPULATION AVERAGE 1841-51'	EVICTION RATE	1841	1851	RANKING 1841-51
ANTRIM	130.6	285,567	259,903	1990.07	272,735	2088.32	6	7	6
ARMAGH	133.0	232,393	196,084	1474.32	214,238.5	1610.82	4	5	4
CAVAN	238.8	243,158	174,064	728.91	208,611	873.58	1	1	- 1
DONEGAL	176.0	296,448	255,158	1449.76	275,803	1567.06	3	4	3
DOWN	183.2	361,446	320,817	1205.33	341,131.5	1862.07	5	3	5
FERMANAGH	60.4	156,481	116,047	1921.31	136,264	2256.03	7	6	7
LONDONDERRY	59.6	222,174	190,022	3221.85	207,098	3474.80	9	9	9
MONAGHAN	180.4	200,442	141,823	786.16	171,132	948.63	2	2	2
TYRONE	87.4	312,956	255,661	2918.50	284,308.5	3252.96	8	8	8
ULSTER	1249.4	2386,373	2011,880	1610.28	2199,126.5	1760.15	-	-	-

TABLE: 1.16, Eviction Rate and Population by Ulster County, 1849-1853

Source: Column One comes from Table 1.13 Annual Average Number of Families Evicted During 1849-53 By Ulster County. Columns Two and Four from Census of Ireland. Column Six was arrived at by adding population totals for 1841 and 1851 and dividing by two. Columns Three, Five and Seven give eviction rate as an expression of the annual average for 1849-53 over the population total.

122 There are a number of methods of evaluating population growth. The '1841-51 Average' is not, as such, an attempt at this. Population at the time of the famine has been discussed above, pp The figure for '1841-51' gives but an overall picture during the period and makes no claim to be an accurate estimate of population size at the outbreak of famine.

accelerated in Munster than in any other province.

Turning to Ulster, the commonly held view that counties Down and Antrim, with their independent and obstreperous Presbyterian tenant farmers, were more peaceful during the famine period, is clearly incorrect. The least number of evictions occurred in the two south-westerly counties of Londonderry and Fermanagh. The next county to register comparatively few evictions was county Tyrone. After these three come counties Antrim and Armagh with very similar rates. The counties of Donegal, Monaghan and Down were in the second tier of eviction rate, with Down recording slightly more than Donegal or Monaghan. County Cavan was out on its own with considerably more evictions than any of the other counties. These figures of course, need some relation to size of population. But the big anomaly, that of county Down although having the largest population in the province, did not have to contend with the same famine aftermath as did its competitors. Clearly, further work must be undertaken into the security of tenant right in county Down during the famine decade.

The position of Monaghan is illuminated when population size is considered. In 1851 it had the second smallest population in Ulster. Table 1.16 opposite, gives the eviction rate for each county during the famine period. The average yearly eviction total has been taken from Table 1.13 and when divided into the population total it gives a more accurate reflection of the eviction level in each county than simply analysing the yearly average. This alters the conclusions, somewhat.

If we take the 1851 figures first of all, as these are nearer to the famine period, it is clear that the two border counties of Cavan and Monaghan were those which were most affected by evictions, (728.91 and 786.16 respectively). A long way behind these two, comes the county of Down with a rate of 1205.33. This somewhat approximates the findings of Table 1.13. In it, the counties of Cavan, Monaghan, Down and Donegal were well above the Ulster average, with Armagh and Antrim only slightly below it. Counties Tyrone, Londonderry and Fermanagh trailed some considerable distance behind. Table 1.16 for 1851 shows Monaghan, Cavan, Down, Donegal and Armagh above the mean line and the rest of the counties, well below it. The peripheral counties of Cavan, Donegal and Monaghan might be expected to register high eviction rates, but that county Down

should also be well above the provincial average, backs up the findings of Table 1.13.

Turning to the 1841 Census total as a means of evaluating the eviction rate, we find that once again, Cavan, Monaghan and Donegal are above average, but this time with Armagh. County Down was fractionally below average. And this ranking holds true for the '1841-1851 population average.' The counties of Londonderry and Tyrone consistently rate ninth and eighth using each of the three variables. Fermanagh rated seventh in 1841, sixth in 1851 and seventh for the '1841-1851.' These three counties, then, must have experienced the least degree of famine upheaval in terms of land tenure of the province of Ulster.

RELIGION

The first Census as to religious profession took place in 1861. There is thus no safe way of discovering how each of the three major religious denominations fared during the famine period. In terms of the island of Ireland, Catholics were the hardest hit. However, in areas such as Monaghan, it seems likely that the Protestants suffered as much as did their Catholic fellow citizens from the vicissitudes of famine. They were disproportionately involved in the linen industry which has been shown to have been one of the major props to the population of south Ulster. Its destruction was a major blow to the welfare of many Protestant communities in south Ulster. The potato, the other prop of the society in this area, was, it is safe to say, relied upon to a greater extent by the Catholic population than the Protestants. But one further factor tipped the scales away from the Protestants, and that was the areas most affected by the famine. We have already noted¹²³ that the area of south Dartrey around the old parish of Galoon was one where Protestants were preponderant, and it was one area where the famine had a particularly harsh effect. Duffy has defined three areas of heaviest loss as firstly, Dartrey, west Farney and the lowlands of Monaghan and Trough; secondly, Cremorne and east Farney, and lastly, thirteen other less affected electoral divisions.¹²⁴ The area where

123 See above, pp 37-8

124 Duffy, Landholding in Monaghan, p 316.

most loss was sustained was Dartrey with its large Protestant population, west Farney which was overwhelmingly Catholic and the Monaghan/Trough lowlands which were of mixed population. Cremorne and east Farney would have been Catholic. This would suggest that Catholic decline may have been, in actuality, greater, but as a percentage of the whole, not so great as the Protestant decline. Nevertheless, it must be stressed that no concrete conclusion can be reached as to which population group suffered the most as a result of the Great Famine. Suffice it to say, that the picture elsewhere in Ireland of wealthy Protestants surviving whilst poor Catholics starved, does not relate to Monaghan. Both groups experienced considerable hardship and, no doubt, both groups saw a resultant decline.

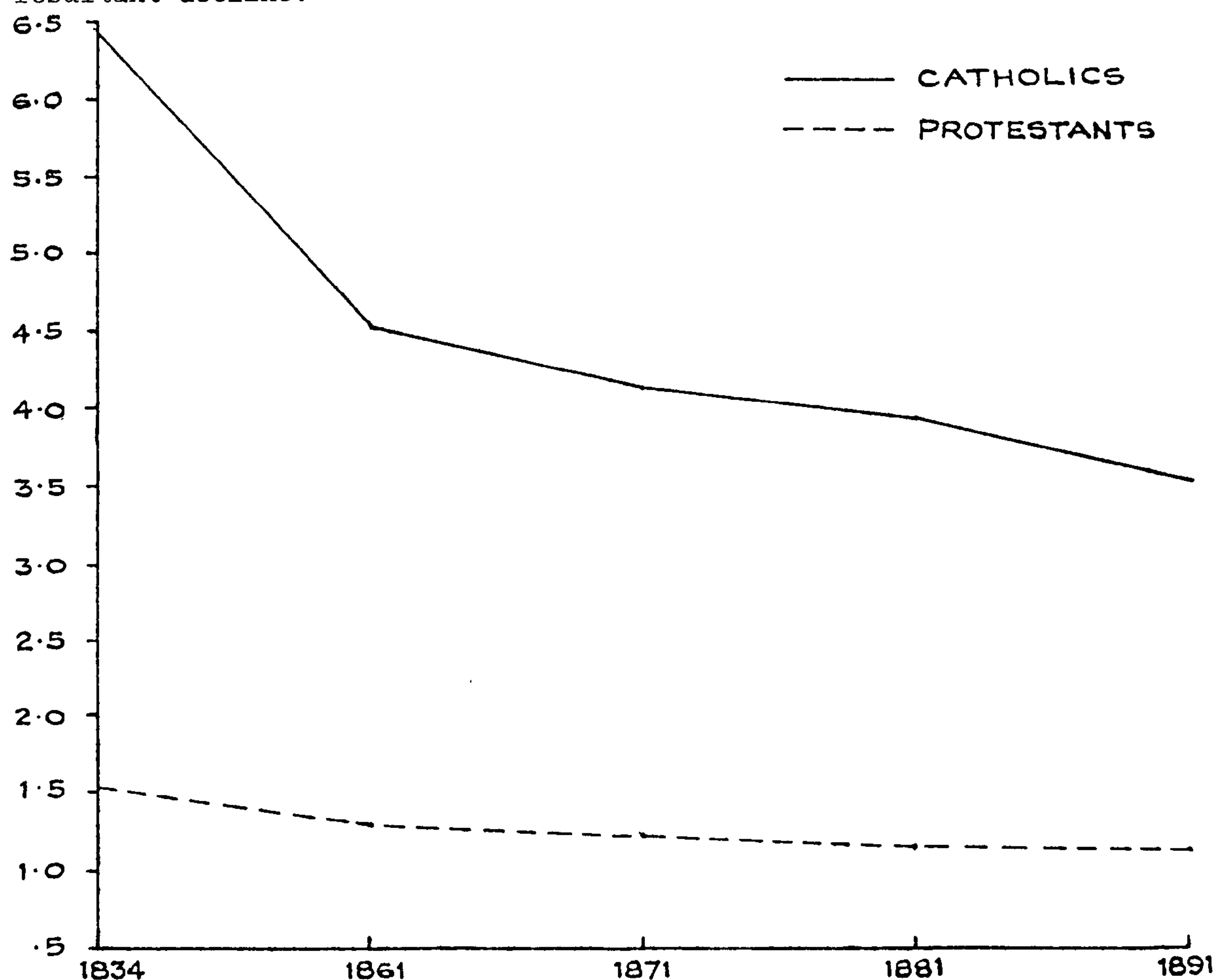


Table 1.17 indicates the relative strength of Protestants and Catholics during the second half of the nineteenth century. It indicates a slight decline in the Catholic proportion of the population. The only pre-famine indication we have of religious strengths in Ireland,



that of the Commissioners of Public Instruction, is of some benefit in that it gives the population of Ireland as it divides into the three major religious groupings. Unfortunately, this does not benefit our county study as it is recorded by diocese.¹²⁵ In the diocese, however, at that time there were 104,359 members of the Established Church (26.13%), 34,623 Presbyterians (8.67%), and 260,241 Roman Catholics (65.18%). Nevertheless, Table 1.16 indicates that there was a fall in the Catholic segment of the population during the second half of the nineteenth century. Table 1.18 gives the same information, only this time in percentage of the total population.¹²⁶

Table 1.18 - Percentage Population of Ireland

	<u>Roman Catholic</u>	<u>Protestant</u>
1834	80.91%	19.09%
1861	77.69%	22.31%
1871	76.69%	23.31%
1881	76.54%	23.46%
1891	75.40%	24.60%

Source: 1834 figure from Commissioners of Public Instruction, 1861-1891 from Census of Ireland.

Both these tables show that the Catholic segment of the population was declining slightly, albeit significantly. The difference between the figures for 1834 and 1861 indicate the large decrease in Catholic population. In actual figures, the Catholic population declined by 1,930,795 people. Protestants, on the other hand, lost 224,398 people.

As noted above, it is impossible to discover the religious split in county Monaghan in 1834. However Table 1.19 gives the religious divide in Ulster during the 1861-1891 period.

125 A diocesan comparison is possible, however, for 1861. Census of Ireland (1861), Vol 4, Religion and Education, p 33, gives religious division in 1834 as Roman Catholic 65.2%, Protestant 34.8% and 1861 as Roman Catholic 65.1%, Protestant 34.9%.

126 Information on the 1834 religious census and its comparison with 1861 can be found in ibid, pp 23-34.

Table 1.19 - Percentage Population of Ulster by Religion

	<u>Roman Catholic</u>	<u>Protestant</u>
1861	50.50%	49.50%
1871	48.94%	51.06%
1881	47.82%	52.18%
1891	45.98%	54.02%

Source: Census of Ireland.

This indicates the slightly more rapid decline in the Catholic population in Ulster than in Ireland, as a whole. In figures, this represents a decline from 1861 to 1891 of 221,754 Catholics, but only 72,668 Protestants.

These figures reflect the decrease both in population and in the relative size of the Catholic community, both for Ireland and for Ulster. They do not, however, suggest to what extent there were differences in growth and retraction of the two populations within Ulster itself. To simplify the figures somewhat, the table records the Catholic percentage of the population of the nine counties.

Table 1.20 - Catholic Percentage of the Population of each Ulster County, 1861-1891.

County	1861	1871	1881	1891	1861-1891
Antrim	24.8%	23.5%	22.7%	21.8%	-0.3%
Armagh	48.8%	47.5%	46.4%	46.1%	-2.7%
Belfast	33.9%	31.9%	28.8%	26.3%	-7.6%
Carrickfergus	11.1%	10.6%	11.7%	9.2%	-1.9%
Cavan	80.5%	80.4%	80.9%	80.9%	+0.4%
Donegal	75.1%	75.7%	76.5%	77.0%	+1.9%
Down	32.5%	31.7%	30.9%	29.8%	-2.7%
Fermanagh	56.5%	55.9%	55.8%	55.4%	-1.1%
Londonderry	45.3%	44.4%	44.4%	44.6%	-0.7%
Monaghan	73.4%	73.4%	73.7%	73.3%	-0.1%
Tyrone	56.5%	55.6%	55.5%	54.6%	-1.9%
ULSTER	50.5%	48.9%	47.8%	46.0%	-4.5%

Source: Census of Ireland.

PROTESTANTS as a % of total population 1861

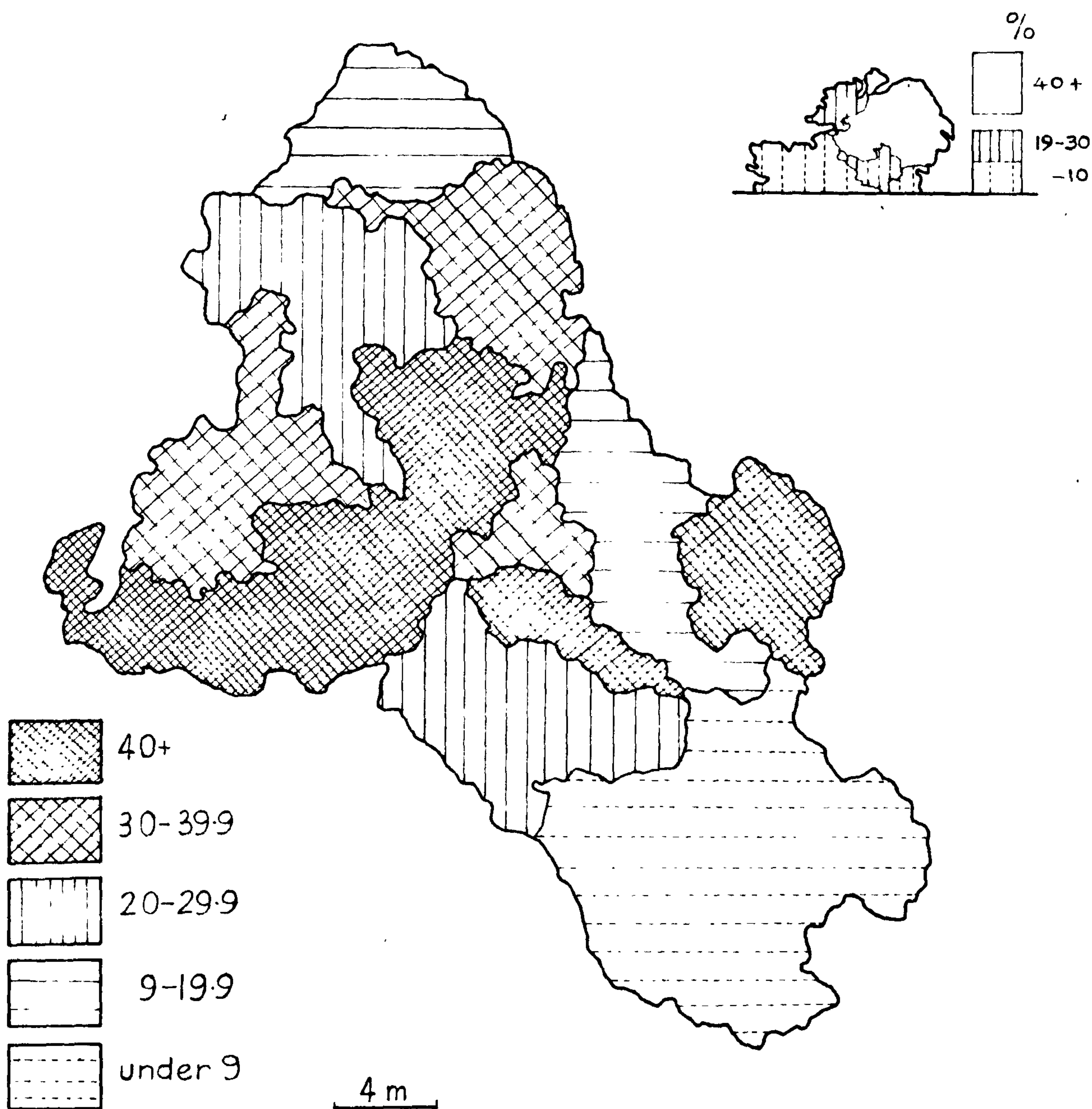


Fig.1.13

Source - Duffy Landholding in Co Monaghan Fig 21

The Catholic segment of the population can be seen to have been on a slow but continual decline in the second half of the nineteenth century. The largest proportional decrease in the province took place in Belfast where the industrialists of the city drew large numbers of Protestants from the Protestant hinterland of north Down and south Antrim. Even with the migration to the city of Belfast from these two counties, the Protestant proportion of the population in Antrim and Down increased. Apart from Catholic decline in Down and Antrim (2.7% and 3.0% respectively), county Armagh with 2.7% reduction and Tyrone with 1.9% were the next most severely affected. And apart from county Fermanagh with a Catholic decline of 1.1%, the south and west of Ulster showed a decided divergence from the provincial pattern. In the north-west, the county of Londonderry saw a Catholic decline of 0.7% whilst Monaghan Catholic decline of 0.1% was insignificant. The counties of Donegal and Cavan experienced increases of 1.9% and 0.4% respectively. This is all the more significant when it is remembered that these two counties experienced a large reduction in their populations. If these peripheral Ulster counties are taken as one region the following findings result. The total population of the three counties in 1861 was 517,783, of whom 394,923 or 76.27% were Roman Catholics. In 1891, the total population was 383,758 and Catholics accounted for a total of 296,555 or 77.28%. Table 1.21 below gives the full figures.

<u>1861</u>			<u>1891</u>		
Roman Catholic	Protestant	Roman Catholic %	Roman Catholic	Protestant	Roman Catholic %
394,923	122,860	76.27	296,555	87,203	77.28

The Catholic segment of the border counties of Ulster, then, saw an increase in the Catholic population of 1.1% at the same time as the Ulster figures indicate a decline of 4.5%. This is all the more significant when it is remembered that this area was the one which suffered the greatest loss in population in the period. For example, the Catholic population decreased from 1861 to 1891 by 24.91%. Their Protestant counterparts, on the other hand, declined by 29.02%.

County Monaghan, although one of the three peripheral counties, did not see such a great decline in its Protestant population. In 1861

Monaghan's population was divided 73.37% Catholic and 26.63% Protestant. By 1891 the figures were 73.26% Catholic and 26.74% Protestant. This indicates an increase in the Protestant section of the county's population of 0.11%. This makes Monaghan somewhat atypical in that whereas Ulster's population became proportionately more Protestant whilst the peripheral region of Monaghan, Cavan and Donegal became more Catholic, the county of Monaghan itself retained an almost identical proportion of Catholics to Protestants.

The distribution of Protestants within the county of Monaghan is also of significance to us in a study of the political activities of the two religious groupings during the nineteenth century. Figure 1.13 gives an idea of the population distribution. It indicates quite clearly that the Monaghan corridor attracted many Protestants to its good farming land. Similarly, in the parish of Muckno in east Monaghan and in Ematris parish in south Dartrey barony, Protestants composed more than half of the population. In addition, the parishes around the corridor region had a large Protestant minority. It is only when one moves to the north or south of the county that overwhelmingly Catholic areas are encountered. This was a reality well recognised by the political managers of the latter half of the century.

CHAPTER II

'Political Representation in Monaghan,
1800-1865'

The Act of Union of 1800 which abolished the Irish parliament reduced the number of Irish representatives from 300 to 100, and they were transferred to the lower house of the new United Kingdom legislature with 32 Lords, 28 temporal and four spiritual, taking their place in the upper house. The members of parliament included two representatives for the cities of Cork and Dublin, one each for the other 31 boroughs, one for the University of Dublin, and two for each of the 32 counties. Of the 11 counties in Ireland which enjoyed no borough representation three were in Ulster - Donegal, Cavan and Monaghan. In all, Ulster returned 28 members to Westminster whereas she had previously sent 76 to College Green.

It could never be claimed that the independent Irish parliament had been either democratic or representative. It was an assembly of the landed elite and professional classes. It was not until 1793 that Catholics and Presbyterians were admitted to the franchise, the latter being afforded the right to also sit in parliament. Whereas the measure greatly increased the democratic nature of the franchise, it contribute to a more responsive legislature. The members of the Irish parliament were almost exclusively drawn from the Anglo-Irish and Protestant ascendancy. And these representatives of Irish constituencies were thus, 'concerned with relations between the Protestant ascendancy and an increasingly Catholic electorate.'¹ It is, however, a moot point

¹ Peter Jupp, British and Irish Elections, 1784-1831, (New York, 1973), p 153.

as to whether the union of the parliaments was a progressive or a regressive act. It was supported by the Catholic hierarchy in the hope that emancipation would be granted by Pitt. In any case the post 1800 geographic distance between Irish voter and Irish representative was no greater a chasm than the social, economic, cultural and religious divide which separated the Member of Parliament from the electorate.

One aspect of the electoral process in Ireland which indicated the homogeneity of those who sought the honour of representing a constituency at Westminster was the low instance of contested elections. By and large the seats were filled by members of the major territorial families or their nominees.² That is not to say that there was no disagreement within landed society as to who should go forward, but rather that any such conflict was settled between gentlemen before nomination day. This was particularly true in the first half of the century where, with the exception of the 1826 general election when the great question of the day was that of Catholic emancipation, contests were not usual. For example, during the period from 1801 up to the general election of 1868 there were 225 county elections in Ulster and 251 in the 10 boroughs. Of these, 44 county seats (19.56%) were contested, and 27 borough seats (39.84%).³ This gives a rate for contested elections within the province of one in four (25.21%).⁴

The period from the general election of 1868 to the general election of 1885 when Irish seats were redistributed saw 43 county elections of which 32 were contested, and 38 borough elections 26 of which saw contests.

2 Jupp has noted that of 256 Irish MPs at Westminster from 1801-1820 only 11 were from the professions, and two of lowly origins. See his, "Irish MPs at Westminster in the early Nineteenth Century," in J C Beckett, ed, Historical Studies, Vol VII, (London, 1969), pp 66-67. Also, J H Whyte, "Landlord Influence at Elections in Ireland, 1760-1885," in English Historical Review, October 1965, Vol 80, pp 740-760.

3 These figures have been estimated from B M Walker, ed, Parliamentary Election Results in Ireland, 1801-1922, Ancillary Publication IV of T W Moody, F X Martin, F J Byrne, eds, A New History of Ireland, (Dublin, 1978).

4 County Monaghan in this period recorded a contest rate of 7 in 24 or 29.17%.

This makes 77.42% and 68.42% respectively, with an overall average of 71.42%. The most striking feature of these figures is that the percentage of contested elections rose dramatically from 25.21% to 71.42%. In other words, a rate of contested elections of three in four instead of one in four. Another factor was that whilst during the earlier period the boroughs were contested twice as frequently as the counties, there was little difference between the figures in the later period.

The reason for the large increase in the number of contested elections from 1868 was that with the democratisation of the electoral register erstwhile safe Tory seats became, for the first time, at risk. The process was so marked over this twenty-year period that in some cases the Tories went from an unassailable position via marginality to one of hopelessness. Thus, for example, the county of Cavan was entirely in Conservative hands from 1801-1874⁵ (with only six contested elections), when it became the first Ulster county to return Home Rule candidates, and henceforward it was left virtually uncontested by the Tories.

County Monaghan was a typical example of the Ulster political scene during the nineteenth century. Although it had a larger Liberal landlord presence than most of its neighbours, it was almost invariably in Tory hands. From 1826, when party labels can be more easily utilised, until 1880, a total of 108 parliamentary years,⁶ the Conservative's total was 75 to the Liberal 33. Liberal representation was further confined to the first half of the period when there was little to choose between the two parties in Monaghan.

Also, the parliamentary representatives were invariably members of large landowning families. One manner of quantifying the control which county society exerted over the parliamentary representation of Monaghan can be indicated by comparing a family breakdown of the total

⁵ The one exception to the Tory hegemony in Cavan was Captain Edward James Saunderson who represented the county as a Liberal from 1865 until defeated by Biggar and Fay. He later emerges as Conservative MP for North Armagh and was the father of the Ulster Unionist Party.

⁶ Total parliamentary years is arrived at by multiplying the number of calendar years in question by the number of representatives. This does not always give an exact figure when compared to the total years in which each MP sat at Westminster due to the time lapse between the death or resignation of one member and his replacement by another.

parliamentary years with landholding; this gives the following tables:-⁷

TABLE 2.1

NAME	EXTENT	VALUATION	NAME	PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION (%)
SHIRLEY	26,386	£20,744 : 10	LESLIE	41.03
BATH	22,762	£19,651 : 00	SHIRLEY	16.03
DARTRY	17,345	£12,883 : 05	ROSSMORE	15.38
ROSSMORE	14,839	£13,427 : 00	DARTRY	<u>11.54</u>
LESLIE	<u>13,674</u>	<u>£11,530 : 05</u>		84.08
	95,006	£78,236 : 00		<u> </u>
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>		

Nor was county Monaghan atypical. Generally speaking, a comparison of the leading landed families and the parliamentary representatives in the constituency gives a similar result. For example, in Dungannon when Thomas N Dickson defeated Colonel Hon. W S Knox in 1874 it was the first time since 1818 that a member of that family had failed to represent the constituency.

The parliamentary representation of Ulster in general and county Monaghan in particular was one of landlord dominance during the first 70 years of the century, with a gradual upsurge of popular feeling as the electoral register became more democratic. It could similarly be described as the loosening of the grip of the Protestant section of the population in favour of the Catholics. As ever, the words Protestant and Catholic are synonymous for Unionist and Nationalist. The broad trend towards modern political politics within the constituency can be further periodised around certain key elections. It is to this periodisation of the political representation of Monaghan that we now turn.

There were five distinct phases. The first stretched from the Act of Union to the general election of 1826. It was followed by the period from that general election until the election of 1868. Phase three

⁷ The parliamentary representation is taken from Walker's study of Ulster elections. The landholding estimates come from Return of the Owners of Land of One Acre and Upwards, in the several Counties, Counties of Cities, and Counties of Towns in Ireland (1876, C -2506).

lasted up to the 1880 election, and the next phase lasted from 1880 to 1883, The final period commenced in 1883 and lasted until the formation of the Irish Free State.

The major part of this work will consider the electoral process during the last three of these phases.

1 1801-1826

During this period the honour of representing the county at Westminster was shared out between various of the major landlords - the Westenras, the Dawsons, the Corrys and the Leslies.

MONAGHAN COUNTY⁸

(2 MPs)

1801	Richard Dawson W W Westenra	
1801	Westenra created Lord Rossmore C P Leslie	
1802	Richard Dawson C P Leslie	
1806	Richard Dawson C P Leslie	
1807	Richard Dawson C P Leslie	
1807	<u>on death of Dawson</u> T C S Corry	
1812	R T Dawson C P Leslie	
1813	<u>Dawson succeeds as Viscount Cremorne</u> T C S Corry	
1818	C P Leslie Hon H R Westenra	
1820	C P Leslie Hon H R Westenra	
1826	E J Shirley Hon H R Westenra C P Leslie Walter Taylor	1889 1502 1240 170

⁸ This listing is taken from Walker, Parliamentary Election Results in Ireland, pp 232-3.

This period, in fact, ended with the 1826 general election which was the first contested election in Monaghan. This was not uncommon. For example, there were only 97 contested elections in Ireland from 1801 prior to the general election of 1826. Of these, 97, general elections accounted for 79. The province of Ulster enjoyed 23 contests.⁹

The agreed nature of the parliamentary candidates during this period did not mean that there was total agreement within landlord ranks. Rather, there was a delicate balance of power which could not be disturbed without disrupting the county and incurring the expense of a campaign. The two major interests in Monaghan were the Dawsons, the Liberals, and the Leslies, their Conservative opponents. Around these magnates were ranged the second tier of county society. Corry, for example, acted as a Dawson substitute when no member of that family was in a position to represent the county. Corry's position was strengthened by the fact that he also had the support of the Anketell interest,¹⁰ he being Anketell's godson.

And just as Corry stood in the wings at Dawson's theatre, so too Lucas of Castleshane was the Leslie protege. In turn Lucas was a distant cousin of Lord Blayney and could expect support for an independent candidacy from that quarter.¹¹ However, rather than split the Tory ranks during the second decade of the century, Lucas had supported Hon. Henry R Westenra, a Liberal and a nominee of the Dawson clique, in return for a pledge that when Charles Powell Leslie died that the Rossmore camp would be agreeable to his taking over the Conservative position.¹² Lucas did not feel that he was in a strong enough position to unseat Leslie although such a move would have gained the support of both Dawson and Westenra's father William Warner Westenra, second Baron Rossmore. The antipathy of these two magnates was principally due to Leslie's opposition to Catholic claims, a cause which they passionately supported.

9 Of these 23 contests, 7 were in Downpatrick, 4 in Carrickfergus and county Fermanagh, 3 in Newry, 2 in county Down, and one each in counties Derry, Donegal and Armagh. Thus 7 boroughs and 4 counties were undisturbed.

10 PRONI, T2929/3/104, 'Rossmore Papers,' Henry R Westenra to William Warner Westenra, second Lord Rossmore, 4 January, 1825.

11 In 1830 Blayney's son hoped similarly for Lucas' support.

12 PRONI, T2929/3/39, Rossmore Papers', HRW to WWW, September, 1823.

Rossmore's son, however, asked his father a few months after the 1820 general election,

What good would it do me? What equivalent should I have for it? Lord Cremorne would gratify an old grudge and I should fund a deficit of £250 a year forever . . . We are in no situation now to court a contest. We are new, as it were, in the county, we have no friends constantly on the spot and we are all of us without a 6d! If we remain quiet, I shall keep my seat. If Cremorne persists, I may lose it. 13

Leslie's position, in fact, was too strong even for Cremorne to attend to without making sure of his ground. The family had traditionally been leaders of the Monaghan Militia and the present incumbent used his position as Colonel in chief of the regiment to considerable advantage. He held the view that as the senior member for the county that he was also the major political interest, and this greatly annoyed the rest of Monaghan society. He had, for example, had the police headquarters situated in Glaslough which was one of the most inaccessible towns in the county for the majority of the population. And at official functions he took the role which should have been filled by the Lord Lieutenant of the county - an insult felt keenly by Lord Rossmore who held that position.¹⁴ But Leslie's patronage, important as it was, was not his major support; this came from his holding of Lord Templetown's interest. Templetown was an absentee and made no conditions upon his backing of Leslie.

R T Dawson, on the Liberal side, had sat for the county from 1812-1813 until he succeeded to the title of Viscount Cremorne. He was the largest interest in the county, and was supported by Sir Thomas Barret-Lennard, the owner of Clones holding 7,920 acres in that part of the county. Lennard was an absentee and a political ally of Cremorne's. He did not, however, have great political ambitions of his own, and contented himself with backing the Cremorne lead.¹⁵ At this time none

13 Ibid, T2929/3/4, HRW to WW, c August/November, 1820.

14 Ibid, c Spring, 1821, T2929/3/10.

15 At the time of the 1857 general election Barret-Lennard's son hopes to contest the seat as a Liberal but does not when Westenra, by then the third Baron Rossmore, refuses to support him. See above pp

of the Dawson family was in a position to represent the county, and Lennard could never have received the support of the freeholders of the county. He was reputed to be 'a man of most violent radical principles.'¹⁶

County society was thus divided into two camps, the one led by the Leslie family, and the other by the Dawsons. As C P Leslie was the head of that family as well as the MP, there was no conflict of interest or friction between backer and nominee. However, difficulties did arise between J R Westenra on the one hand, and his father, Lord Rossmore, and Lord Cremorne on the other. Cremorne in particular wished the young Westenra to vote against the Tory government at every opportunity. This was something he was not prepared to do. He had stated initially that he would sit independent of party and vote for all issues which would be of benefit to Ireland. This was not enough for Cremorne who wished full obedience from 'his' MP, and as a violent party man wished constant opposition to be shown to the Tories. Westenra retorted to his father that he could not have it said,

That I had humbled myself in the opinion of every man to humour the madness of whom? Of a man who keeps company with every rogue¹⁷ and whore in London and is known by nobody else.

Throughout the period 1818-1826 Cremorne was unhappy with Westenra's Westminster record. Westenra's actions suggest that he did not act as a party man, and he consistently stated that he would "not bow the knee to Cremorne's wish that I should oppose government upon every single measure they propose. I will not bow to anyone else's wish . . ."¹⁸ He had taken the trouble to point out to one of the members of Lord Liverpool's administration that the great support which he had received in the county of Monaghan, besides his own, was 'decidedly hostile to the present ministry.'¹⁹ This was undoubtedly done so as to impress upon the Tories just how valuable his support was. This may have been in the

16 PRONI , 'Rossmore Papers,' HRW to WWW, 29 April, 1822, T2929/3/19.

17 Ibid, 25 October, 1823, HRW to WWW, T2929/3/40.

18 Ibid, 26 May, 1820, HRW to WWW, T2929/3/3.

19 Ibid, 20 November 1821-20 January 1822, HRW to WWW, T2929/3/14.

hope of getting a representative peerage for the family.

All this friction between Westenra and Cremorne placed Lord Rossmore in an invidious position. He had always been a close friend of Cremorne's and he did not wish to alienate that friendship. He was seen as a great friend of the Catholics in the county,²⁰ and he was constantly being questioned about his son's voting record in parliament. The difficulty was that whereas Westenra claimed to vote on issues and not men, he generally saw Ireland's interest as lying in association with Tory measures throughout this period. This was so much the case that on the rare occasions when he did vote against the government, he wrote to his father directing him to contact Cremorne to that effect.²¹

A major theme underlying the actions of both Rossmore and his son was the belief that they were rapidly building up the family's interest into one of the major political entities within the county. To this end, Henry R Westenra had suggested to Colonel Leslie upon his first election as the county's other MP that,

. . . if Leslie and I kept all others aloof, we might represent the county during his life with very little fear of anyone else interfering and with no expense. We upon that point understood each other, and as it was for the interest of both parties, so²² it was likely to be both binding and lasting.

Such an agreement was much easier to ensure upon Leslie's part than Westenra's. Cremorne was the foremost magnate in the county and he was unhappy to accept anything less than fealty from the young MP. Thus, by the beginning of the 1820s it looked as if Westenra was about to speculate about the efficacy of a union with the Leslie/Templetown interest.²³ From the Rossmore point of view it was important that if there was a break that Cremorne be seen to have instigated it so that the Westenra family would not be seen as fickle. The major disadvantage which would result from an alliance with Leslie was that there would be

20 See below, pp 67-70.

21 Ibid, Draft letter, WWW to Lord Cremorne, T2929/3/16, n d,

22 T2929/3/14,

23 Ibid, T2929/3/15, HRW to WWW, 5 March 1822.

constant electoral contests with Cremorne who would then be without a voice in the House of Commons. He would probably have faced the defection of Westenra with an alliance with Lennard and possibly Lord Blayney. The ensuing battle for electoral control of the county would have left the Westenra family resources (not large in any case) severely depleted.²⁴ This was probably the major reason why a Westenra/Leslie alliance did not materialise. Yet Henry Westenra was still unwilling to give up his parliamentary independence. But as he noted to his father, an alliance with Cremorne,

. . . if we could keep him quiet; would be more for pecuniary interest. I entered into no understanding with Shrug (Leslie) but that we should try to keep our friends quiet, and then we need fear nothing & nobody, he with Templetown's interest, I with Cremorne's; and that if we could bring those to unite, we might murder anyone else. But no engagement to do so, only ²⁵ a talk on the subject.

Cremorne's demands of obedience were not the only threat to Westenra's parliamentary hegemony. Lord Blayney, by then a very old man, had decided that his son should have a share in the county's representation. He was able to enfranchise 800 Forty Shilling freeholders²⁶ which would thus strengthen his position.²⁷ He might then treat with Leslie in return for not unseating him, or with Cremorne for a similar quid pro quo.²⁸ Alternatively, he might make a pact with Lucas who was a distant cousin.²⁸ On the other hand, he might campaign upon the Catholic issue and hope to attract enough Catholic votes away from the other landlords to ensure victory. He could remind the Catholic electors of the county that an ancestor of his had taken an active part in opposing the spread of Orangeism from Armagh into Monaghan after its inception.²⁹

24 A parliamentary candidate could expect to pay upwards of £5,000 to contest an election.

25 T2929/3/18, HRW to WW, 23 April, 1822. See also their letter on possible alliance with Leslie to preserve status quo, T2929/3/20, HRW to WW, 9 October 1823.

26 T2929/3/36, HRW to WW, 9 October 1823.

27 The qualification for voting up to 1829 was the 40/= Freehold. That is, a tenant holding a lease to property valued at at least that sum per annum was entitled to the vote.

28 T2929/3/37, HRW to WW, 10 October, 1823.

29 Blayney was one of the major anti-Orange landlords in south Ulster. See Hereward Senior, Orangeism in Ireland and Britain, (London, 1966), p 79.

From the point of view of both Leslie and Westenra the advent of a Blayney candidacy would be a setback. But from the latter's point of view it was perhaps better that Blayney come forward than anyone else. The most serious potential rival candidate would have been Lucas of Castleshane, admitted to be both brilliant and popular. He was a man who if once installed in either of the county seats would have been virtually impossible to displace. Thus with almost Machiavellian stealth and cunning Lord Rossmore wrote to his son that if there had to be a contest that the family should quietly persuade Cadwallader Blayney to stand, as he could be beaten.³⁰ As it turned out, Blayney held his hand until the 1830 general election.

As early as 1822 another name was linked with the representation of the county. This was Evelyn John Shirley.³¹ The key to Shirley's strength lay in the fact that in 1799 the family had had a bill put before the Dublin parliament to let the extensive Shirley holdings in Monaghan on lives. That is, to give tenants leases (generally lasting for three named lives) to their holdings and make them eligible to receive the franchise. This had the effect of making 2,000 voters upon the Shirley estate,³² which, in fact, potentially doubled the number of people eligible to vote. But perhaps even more significant was that it would greatly increase the Catholic segment upon the register.³³ This, in turn, would exacerbate the sectarian strife which Monaghan was currently experiencing; Ballybay being one of the most turbulent areas.³⁴

The Shirley family had not completed the process of actually registering their tenants for the vote and this was something which Evelyn Shirley now proposed to do. There was a certain amount of speculation as to whether or not he would be able to register his tenantry.

30 T2929/3/49, Memo from WWW to HRW, probably February/March 1823.

31 T2929/3/21, William Thornhill to Colonel H Westenra, 31 May 1822.

32 PRONI, D3531/A/5, rough copy of a letter from Evelyn Shirley to Lord Cornwallis Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, 16 December 1799.

33 It has been estimated that the parishes which held the Shirley estate contained 50 Catholics for every Protestant.

34 On this point see A McClelland, 'Orangeism in Monaghan', in Clogher Record, Vol VIII, 1978, p 388.

If he could, then things looked bleak for the Westenra interest as Henry was to note in a letter to his uncle, Colonel H W Westenra.

You mention the sun which has risen at Carrickmacross may throw a new light on the subject. If we mean to keep that county, it would appear to me, now is our moment for a rally. We are the popular candidate (sic) at this instant & nothing but the strong voice of the co. can prevent your Mr Phoebus from having it all³⁵ his own way, if he is able to do what he threatens.

The feeling within the Westenra camp was that if Shirley got his voters registered and should coalesce with any other great interest then the county was lost to them. It appeared that a Shirley/Westenra union would see Evelyn John Shirley and Henry R Westenra returned at the expense of Leslie. If, on the other hand, Shirley and Blayney were in opposition to Westenra and Cremorne then there would be no change. Shirley's political future was principally dependent upon his being able to register the forty shilling Freeholders upon his estate.

There was another side to the forty shilling Freehold question which had nothing to do with Shirley. This was the proposal to abolish the forty shilling qualification altogether in favour of one based upon £10. Whereas this would be detrimental to the Shirley hopes of winning one of the two seats, it would also seriously undermine the Westenras as Henry noted in a letter to Lord Rossmore. He wrote,

I can see that if this business of the 40s freeholders being abolished is to take place, that (sic) every freeholder in the county Monaghan (with the exception of 10 perhaps at the most) will be a stiff uncompromising Protestant or one of the unco gude and reegidley righteous descendants of the John Presbyters of the north, & that if I strayed one inch out of the straight line of direct opposition to everything at all approaching to a seeming favouring of Catholic interest, I should have as good a chance of receiving future support from them, as I should have of sailing³⁶ up to the moon.

The forty shilling Freehold was a two-edged sword which would Protestantise and anti-Catholicise the electorate if it was abolished, whereas if it remained it would offer Shirley the opportunity of forcing himself into Westminster.

³⁵ T2929/3/52, HRW to Colonel H W Westenra, 4 May 1824.

³⁶ T2929/3/27, HRW to WW, 5 April 1823.

Shirley's intervention also made it incumbent upon either Lord Rossmore or Henry Westenra to come to Rossmore Park and build a large home; there being none on the estate at that time with the exception of Camla and Ballyleck, neither of which would have been suitable residences for someone in Rossmore's position. Shirley had decided to take up residence in Monaghan and in 1825, the same year as he enfranchised a large number of Catholics in his position of High Sheriff, he laid the foundation stone of a new and elaborate mansion at Lough Fea, outside Carrickmacross.

The branch of the family incumbent on the Monaghan property was that of Richard W Westenra, the MP's brother. He was very aware of the residency requirement. He even wrote to his father to the effect that as a resident and a freeholder, he was of the opinion that unless Rossmore or H R Westenra, " . . . attend to the interests of the county of Monaghan and Ireland in general, I myself will vote against you."³⁷ His major objection was that with the exception of the week when the Assizes sat, neither of them ever ventured into the county. This somewhat overstated warning led to the proposal that one of them should move to Monaghan, and this proposal was to be a feature of most of the subsequent correspondence between Lord Rossmore and Henry Westenra. Clearly neither of them relished the thought of leaving London to live, even part of the time, in that county.

The advent of the 1826 general election meant that all these theories and suppositions could be put to the test. The two incumbents indicated their intention of contesting the seats. Evelyn Shirley had been successful in registering large numbers of his Catholic tenantry for the vote, and was thus certain to force a contest. This meant that Monaghan faced its first election since the Act of Union.

Charles Powell Leslie of Glaslough was the senior member for the county and of him his supporters claimed,

His Protestant religion, his king, his county, and our glorious constitution . . . all these the Colonel has uniformly supported.³⁸

³⁷ T2929/3/31, Richard W To WW, 8 July 1823.

³⁸ Martin Cahill, 'The 1826 general election in Co Monaghan,' in Clogher Record, Vol V, No 1, (1964), p 163.

And for his own part he boasted that his political opinions had not altered in 26 years - a factor which elicited praise at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Henry R Westenra, his associate in parliament, had been at Westminster for eight years. He was an unlikely Liberal, but his father was a strong supporter of the Catholic cause, his wife being a member of that faith.³⁹ In 1818 when he was elected he had indicated that he was against Catholic emancipation in a letter to a Conservative gathering.⁴⁰ And he had proven his fidelity to these principles by voting against the bill for the relief of Catholics.⁴¹ But in 1826 no-one was really certain as to what was Westenra's attitude towards the Catholics. His voting against Grattan's relief bill had been the start of his difficulties with Cremorne.⁴² He was, in fact, walking a tightrope, attempting to placate two irreconcilable elements. He had written to his father in 1813, five years before he entered parliament,

I wish to the Lord something may have taken place with regard to the Catholic claims before I have any part to act in Monaghan that will be satisfactory to both parties; for, keeping two faces under a hood at any time is highly unpleasant, but particularly so when one is convinced of the instability of the ground one is standing on . . . every argument (against emancipation) has been shown to be absurd over and over again, that every fool might knock me down in a minute. The fact is this: prejudices are more difficult to overcome than conviction; and we are never so obstinate as when we are in doubt, or else the Catholic claims had been granted long ago!!⁴³

The timing of this letter was significant because in 1813 R T Dawson, one of the sitting members had succeeded to the title Lord Cremorne, and Westenra could well have filled the vacancy if he had so desired. Instead he appeared to have drawn back, and the reason for this was that he did not wish to publicly declare upon the emancipation issue. Nevertheless, it is clear that he was personally in favour of enfranchisement of Catholics.

39 Lord Rossmore, Things I Can Tell, (London, 1912), pp 37-38.

40 See below, p 71.

41 Cahill, 'The 1826 general election in Monaghan,' Clogher Record, Vol V, No 1, (1964) p 161.

42 T2929/3/65, WW to HRW, 10 September 1824.

43 T2929/3/1, HRW to WW, 12 April, 1813.

His opposition to a measure granting full emancipation in 1819 brought censure not only from Cremorne, but also from his father. Henry explained his actions by claiming that he had always believed that the Protestant Church and state should be supreme, and that,

. . . until every foreign intervention was guarded against, until we had a complete dominion and control over their church concerns, I could not bring myself to give them a voice in the regulation of ours. Are they to gain everything & concede nothing, & are we to lose what we have and concede everything? 44

In other words, H R Westenra was a supporter of the political emancipation of the Catholics. He would probably also have been in favour of state aid to the Catholic Church as long as the bishops accepted the royal veto. This was something which the young Daniel O'Connell had rejected out of hand. He had said of such a proposal,

How dismal the prospect of liberty would be if in every Catholic diocese there was an active partisan of the government and in every Catholic parish a priest as an active informer. 45

Holding these views Westenra had been able to honestly state that he supported the Protestant Ascendancy, although his views would have been considerably different from those espoused by Orangemen and other Ascendancyites.⁴⁶ His public pronouncement to the effect that he supported the Protestant Ascendancy had helped to ensure his election in 1818. The problem was now to persuade the Catholics that he was a true friend of their interests and thus see himself back to Westminster on the strength of their votes. It was clear that they were, for the first time, a force to be reckoned with.

Catholic support for the emancipation campaign had been organised for some time in the county. On 3 September, 1811, a public meeting had been held in Ballybay, and most of the county's most prominent Catholics were present. It was decided at that time to form a countywide

44 T2929/3/2, HRW to Lord Cremorne, 15 June 1819.

45 Cited in E Curtis, A History of Ireland, (London, 1968), p 357.

46 T2929/3/120, HRW to WWW, 24 January 1813. In this letter Westenra wrote to his father that they should have a law making them equal to Protestants, but to give them full civil rights would place them above Protestants; presumably they could then influence the state church whilst their church would be administered by foreign prelates. This Westenra would never accept.

committee to ensure,

That petitions be presented to the Legislature early in the next session of Parliament, praying the total abolition of the Penal Laws which aggrieve the Catholics of Ireland.⁴⁷

Significant as this gathering was, the real spark which lit the fire of emancipation's flame came in 1823 with the formation of O'Connell's Catholic Association. The big difference between this movement and such earlier attempts as the one noted above in Ballybay was that it was not confined to "a clique of well-to-do Catholics. It aimed at a mass membership . . ."⁴⁸ This new political innovation, for its appeal to the masses was as much a new departure as Devoy's much heralded union of constitutional and advanced nationalist half a century later, was to redefine the parameters within which the Catholic issue would be discussed, and it was to lead ultimately to victory. Within Monaghan the success of the new organisation depended upon the enthusiasm of the local clergy for the venture.⁴⁹ The turning point for the county came when Bishop Edward Kernan sent £35 to the Association in Dublin on behalf of the Catholic clergy of Clogher in January 1825.⁵⁰ As early as 1821 the clergy had started to show an interest in emancipation meetings, and in December 1824 Kernan had himself attended a large gathering in Enniskillen to institute the Catholic rent in the diocese.⁵¹

The 1826 election was to be the first concerted attempt at political power of the elite. There had been isolated examples of small-scale clerical interference during the general election of 1818, but nothing on the scale of 1826.⁵² In Waterford a Catholic lawyer called Thomas

47 D C Rushe, History of Monaghan for Two Hundred Years, 1660-1860, (Dundalk, 1921), p 169.

48 J H Whyte, 'The Age of Daniel O'Connell (1800-1847)', in T W Moody and F X Martin eds, The Course of Irish History, (Cork, 1967), p 250.

49 P Livingstone, The Monaghan Story, (Enniskillen, 1980) notes that Father James Duffy of Clones and Father Arnold MacMahon of Tydavnet were extremely active in local O'Connellite causes.

50 P Mulligan, The Life and Times of Bishop Edward Kernan, in Clogher Record, Vol X, No 3, (1981), p 337.

51 Ibid.

52 J H Whyte in his article 'The Influence of the Catholic clergy on Elections in Nineteenth Century Ireland' in English Historical Review, Vol 75, (1960), sees 1826 as the first great clerical endeavour.

Wyse was able to secure the backing of the local bishop for a candidate to oppose Lord George Beresford. It quickly became evident that a concerted Catholic effort would be effected at the polls there.⁵³ This gave the movement in Monaghan an added impetus.

Westenra's father, Lord Rossmore, was a well known advocate of Catholic claims having been a signatory of the Buckingham House Resolutions. He interceded with the local members of the Association and they agreed to support his son. In addition, the Monaghan Independent Club was approached by the prospective candidate and they also agreed to endorse him. There was some question as to whether or not O'Connell was satisfied with Westenra's claims, but in any case he decided not to interfere for fear of splitting the local association.⁵⁴ He then wrote a letter to each member of the Catholic clergy in the county.

In his communication O'Connell pointed out that Shirley was bound to be elected and that Leslie was one of the Catholics' most inveterate opponents at Westminster. O'Connell said of him,

. . . he has grown old in the principles of bigotry and in all probability he will die as he has lived, one of the most uncompromising enemies of his Catholic countrymen, nor does it appear that nature has blessed him with sufficient intellect to enable⁵⁵ him to appreciate his errors.

With regard to the other sitting member he noted that his father, Lord Rossmore, had endorsed him, as had Lord Cremorne. As both gentlemen were warm supporters of the Catholic cause, this was enough to make Westenra worthy of receiving the Catholic vote. Westenra had refused to pledge himself against emancipation and might support it in parliament. But if for no other reason, O'Connell concluded, Shirley and Westenra should be supported to ensure that Charles Powell Leslie be removed from the representation of the county.

The local Catholic Association thus endorsed Shirley and Westenra. The Protestant party supported Leslie. A fourth candidate, Walter Tyler,

⁵³ Thomas Wyse, Historical Sketch of the Late Catholic Association of Ireland, (London, 1829), Vol II, pp270-292.

⁵⁴ Rushe, History of Monaghan for Two Hundred Years, P 186.

⁵⁵ Ibid, p 187.

was started by the Leslieites to ensure that none of his supporters would cast their votes for Westenra. The situation was further confused by the fact that Shirley, although supported by the Catholic Association in conjunction with Westenra, viewed himself as running independently and requested his supporters to give their second votes to Leslie. To this end, he sent his tenants a letter which stated,

I am pledged by everything most sacred . . . to support Colonel Leslie to the utmost of my power, I call upon every man who is my friend to give his second vote to Colonel Leslie. How can I expect, in honour Colonel Leslie's votes if my friends do not support him . . .

I trust that myself and friend may depend on your exertions in our cause and prove that mutual and sincere attachment between tenantry and landlord never was nor never shall be dissolved in⁵⁶ Farney.

Thus canvassing centred more and more on Farney as polling day approached.

Westenra's position was not altogether clear in any case. O'Connell's letter had alienated a large percentage of the Presbyterian electors, numerous around Monaghan town, from his cause. Presumably because he felt uncertain that the Catholic vote alone would see him to victory, he prevaricated somewhat. After all, he had to depend upon Shirley's Catholic tenants disobeying their instructions to favour Leslie with their second vote. Westenra's supposed duplicity was compounded by the publication of a letter which he had sent to a local Tory landlord which indicated that his views had not altered since 1818.⁵⁷ However, he was able to retain Catholic support for the election.

⁵⁶ Cahill, 'The 1826 general election in Monaghan,' Clogher Record, Vol V, No 1, (1964) p 170.

⁵⁷ Once again, Westenra was running with the fox and hunting with the hounds. Such sentiments would give Protestant tenants on the Rossmore holdings an excuse to vote for him, while at the same time he secured the support of the Catholic freeholders through his father's offices. Rossmore tenants were evenly split Catholic, Church of Ireland and Presbyterian. See Rossmore, Things I Can Tell, passim.

Westenra had also hoped for aid from the Orangemen, on the grounds of his brother being prominent in local Orange circles. In 1824 for example, they had been very active in aiding the cause of Henry Maxwell in neighbouring county Cavan.⁵⁸ Th MP similarly hoped for Orange aid in Monaghan. However, Richard had informed his father,

You speak in the next place of putting the Orangemen in motion. We are not a body that can be called into action as the Roman Catholics, unless in case of danger to the state or the Protestant religion. The papists are wielded anyway by the power of the priests. The Orangemen would wish to go with me, but unless they are independent of their landlords, they always vote for whomever they are directed. The Dublin Orangemen would be of no service, unless they had property here or were immediately connected with those that have.⁵⁹

Orangeism would thus be of no benefit to H R Westenra. It was in any case, at a low ebb since 1820 with few friends amongst Lord Wellesley's administration in Dublin. The Unlawful Oaths Act of 1823 had questioned the legality of Orangeism and Grand Lodge had dissolved and reconvened itself in 1824. The following year it again dissolved itself. There was thus no Orange Institution in existence during the period immediately prior to the general election. In England benevolent associations had kept Orangeism alive, but in Ireland such attempts proved less successful.

The election of 1826 was probably the most violent ever seen in the county. Nomination day was Saturday, 24 June. This was traditionally the first day of the contest, and the Westenra and Leslie voters came into conflict in Glaslough Street in Monaghan town when Leslie was arriving for nomination. A large riot ensued with the Constabulary eventually firing upon the mobs, with at least three deaths resulting.⁶¹ The contest continued in a similar vein, with large numbers of wounded and some fatalities supposedly recorded each day.⁶² The following Wednesday, the day when the majority of Shirley's tenantry made the journey from Farney to vote, saw another large riot. The day was known

⁵⁸ R M Sibbett, Orangeism in Ireland & Throughout the Empire, 2 Vols, (London, 1939), p 212.

⁵⁹ T2929/3/53, Richard WW to WWW, 12 June, 1824.

⁶⁰ Hereward Senior, Orangeism in Britain and Ireland, (London, 1966), pp 197-208.

⁶¹ Cahill, 'The 1826 general election in Monaghan,' Clogher Record, Vol V, No 1, (1964), p 171-172.

⁶² Rushe, History of Monaghan for Two Hundred Years, p 189.

thereafter as 'Stick Wednesday' due to the alarming propensity of Monaghan men to resort to shillelaghs when discussing political issues.

The result of the election showed a Catholic victory.

Shirley	1,889	
Westenra	1,502	
Leslie	1,240	
Tyler	170	63

The two Liberals, Shirley and Westenra, had been returned, whereas Leslie was defeated. The scenes which followed the announcement of the result on Friday morning reflected the enormous enthusiasm which the contest had elicited. The Westenra celebrations in Monaghan town went on all day. Two of his foremost supporters, Charles Lucas and Dacre Hamilton were borne in triumph around the Diamond. Westenra received similar treatment when he emerged from his Committee Rooms. Shirley's supporters celebrated in Carrickmacross, but there was the shadow hanging over the festivities that so many tenants had defied their landlord's wishes with regard to the casting of their second votes.

One result of the election was that there was an immediate reaction by various landlords against their tenants who had voted for Westenra. Captain Woodwright of Gola House, Scotstown, temporarily impounded the cattle of those of his tenants who were in arrears and had voted against Leslie. Similar action was taken by Lord Blayney's agent.

It was surprising to find that strong action was also taken upon recalcitrant tenants upon the estate of Evelyn Shirley who had headed the poll. In total, 616 tenants on the Shirley estate cast their votes.⁶⁴ This figure breaks down as follows:

Shirley Plumpers	254	(41.23%)
Shirley & Leslie	112	(18.18%)
Shirley & Westenra	241	(39.12%)
Westenra Plumpers	9	(1.46%)
	616	99.99%

⁶³Walker, Parliamentary Election Results in Ireland, p 233.

⁶⁴ D3531/E/1, Manuscript book listing how Shirley tenantry voted during the 1826 election.

Only 18.18% of Shirley's tenantry followed their landlord's directions and voted for Shirley and Leslie. Of the rest, 41.23% took the discreet course of plumping for Shirley. Whilst they were contravening their landlord's instructions, they were, at least, not helping his adversary. Almost as many as plumped for Shirley gave their second vote to Westenra. This was a direct contravention of instructions. In addition, nine tenants were so opposed to the Shirleys that they plumped for Westenra. Nevertheless, although Shirley might complain that only 18% of his tenants followed his advice with regard to casting their second vote, on the other hand, 98.53% of his tenants voted for him. The depth of his rancour at the result was surprising. A leading member of the Catholic Association noted,

The very week after the election he and his agents commenced an attack on those very men who supported him in the election. Not satisfied with the payment of the accustomed gale of rent, he called on them for a dead or hanging gale which they never before had been called on to pay. He had their cattle impounded and set⁶⁵ up for auction.

Some tenants signed a petition to the effect that they were intimidated into going against their landlord's wishes. It is possible that this was a ploy to avoid retribution,⁶⁶ but it had to be admitted that neighbouring tenants could be as intimidatory as a landlord. There was certainly much evidence of Catholic voters who threatened to go against the popular will being forcefully shown the error of their ways.

In the other constituencies where the Association became involved they were rewarded with complete success. The Waterford contest, by far the most famous, pitted Villiers Stuart, a prominent local landlord, against the most powerful magnate in the county, Lord George Beresford. And whereas this was a memorable victory, it like Monaghan and Westmeath saw local gentry returned at the expense of others of that class. In

65 Cahill, 'The 1826 general election in Monaghan,' Clogher Record, Vol V, No 1, (1964), p 178.

66 Ibid. This is Cahill's suggestion, but he offers no proof on which to base his assertion.

Louth, however, the favoured candidate, Alexander Dawson could make no such claims and his victory was perhaps even more memorable.⁶⁷ It could not have been achieved without clerical backing and the popular will. Both of these commodities had altered significantly in the first two decades since the union. The clerics now divided into two groups,

The old, were adverse to all species of disturbance, and, with very indistinct views of civil rights, thought it an indecorous departure from their ecclesiastical character, the engaging even remotely in the tumult of a contested election . . . The young were of a very different temper: for the most part they had been educated at Maynooth, and had carried with them . . . all that spirit of independence and democracy, which of later years has more or less, become a characteristic of Irish Catholic education.⁶⁸

The result of polling in county Monaghan, like the other three, appeared on the face of it to have been a great victory for the Catholic democracy. However, with the exception of Dawson in Louth, the representation of the constituencies was still in the hands of the landed elite, and each of the four was a Protestant. Where a great change took place was in the demonstration that there was now a potential method of harnessing the latent powers of the Catholic multitudes in forcing a redress of their grievances. It indicated the potential of modern political action. What O'Connell was to achieve was to lead the Catholic masses into modern political politics with the Catholic sentiment dominant. Monaghan had been one of the constituencies in Ireland to realise this potential. But it would be overeuphoric to suggest as one scholar has, that the defeat of Leslie in Monaghan by the Catholic electors,

. . . had clearly demonstrated that they were now sufficiently independent to disregard their landlords' wishes when it came to casting their vote.⁶⁹

By far, the most tangible result of the election was that it forced a cleavage within landlord ranks. Whereas there had always been a Liberal/Conservative divide, it had meant little. Indeed, it reflected more the different attitudes toward English and Imperial measures and was of little consequence in Ireland. The question of Catholic emancipation

67 J C Beckett, The Making of Modern Ireland, (London 1966), p 299.

68 Wyse, Historical Sketch of the Late Catholic Association of Ireland, pp 280-281.

69 Livingston, Monaghan Story, p 187.

and the virulent nature of the campaign brought such divergences of interest to light. This was further exacerbated by Leslie's unsuccessful attempt to have the result declared void. His petition complained upon the following grounds; that O'Connell had written to the priests and that they had subsequently endorsed Westenra, that John Bric, an organiser for the Catholic Association, and several Catholic clerics addressed meetings of Catholic electors, that the clergy attended the booths and tallied for Westenra, that the Bishop of Clogher supported the campaign, and that a number of freeholders were made prior to the election to aid Westenra whose father, an Irish peer, canvassed for him. There were a number of other minor points raised by the petition, but it was unsuccessful.⁷⁰

The acrimony within landlord ranks which was engendered by the election campaign was kept alive during the period immediately following the election by a long sequence of correspondence in the newspapers as to who had been responsible for the 'Stony Saturday' debacle. Feeling was so heated that when Colonel Madden and Henry R Westenra met in Monaghan town they exchanged words, insults, challenges and finally pistol balls over the matter. Neither was injured and it was reported to be one of the last duels between gentlemen to occur in Ireland.⁷¹

The 1826 election marked the end of an era, and of the first phase of Monaghan electoral representation. It had demonstrated that the Catholic masses could, when properly organised and animated, countermand their landlords' wishes and defeat landlord candidates. Of course, the representation of the county was still safely in the hands of the Protestant landed elite, but the bastion had been shaken and the walls temporarily breached. The Monaghan result was but a harbinger of things to come. Westenra's victory was also suggestive of the power of a landlord with popular support. This was not only recognised by the Catholic voters. It was also noticed by the land owners, and henceforward Monaghan would see political campaigns fought by members of the landed classes but with popular appeal. The parliamentary representation of Monaghan had been taken from the drawing rooms of the large

⁷⁰ Rushe, History of Monaghan for Two Hundred Years, p 190.

⁷¹ Rossmore, Things I Can Tell, p 19.

houses and relocated where it belonged, before the people of the county. This would not make Monaghan a democratic constituency in the modern sense of the term, but it broadened the scope of the electoral process to a much wider cross-section of the society.

2 1826-1868

It would be easy to overestimate the importance of the 1826 election result in Monaghan. That it was vitally important goes without saying, but historians have, from time to time, occasionally seen the 1826 general election as a watershed after which elections in Ireland become almost democratic. This was certainly not the case. Whilst the Catholic masses had proven that they could be an effective political power, they were not henceforward to select the man of their choice. At best, the new political climate would attest to the fact that members of the elite who contested the constituencies would henceforward have to at least pay lip-service to popular sentiment.

The political fortunes of H R Westenra were not all unbounded success during this period of his political life, and himself excepted, only once during the period does a popular candidate emerge for the county. Dr John Gray, decidedly defeated in 1852, was a temporary aberration caused by the Tenant League. It is fair to state that the honour of representing the county at Westminster continued to be the preserve of the landed elite during the second phase of parliamentary activity in county Monaghan.

Table 2.3 below, gives a listing for county Monaghan of all the members of Parliament and the unsuccessful contestants during this period. One clear comparison with the first phase of parliamentary representation is that the name of Leslie remains the major factor in the electoral struggle.⁷² A member of the Leslie family sat for the county from 1801 until defeated in 1826, after which there was a break until 1843 when the family again got a seat; ironically it was after the elevation of Hon H R Westenra to the peerage. This second Charles Powell Leslie, son of the 1801-1826 MP, sat for the county until his death in 1871 when his

⁷² Some member of the Leslie family held one of the Monaghan seats from 1801-1826 and 1843-1880; that is, 63 years out of a total of eighty years.

younger brother took over the family seat until he too, was defeated in 1880 during the Liberal victory of Givan and Findlater.

Table 2.3 MONAGHAN COUNTY⁷³
(2 MPs)

1830	Hon C D Blayney		631
	E J Shirley		472
	Hon H R Westenra		405
	Hon J C Westenra		78
	A G Lewis		48
1831	Hon C D Blayney	C	
	Hon H R Westenra	L	
1832	Hon C D Blayney	C	1454
	Louis Perrin	L	1039
	Hon H R Westenra	L	1055
1834	Blayney succeeds as Lord Blayney		
	Hon H R Westenra	L	1078
	Edward Lucas	C	984
<u>On petition, Westenra unseated and Lucas declared elected, 30 July, 1834; Westenra's poll amended to 973</u>			
1835	Edward Lucas	C	914
	Hon H R Westenra	L	733
	W E Hudson	L	66
	David Leslie	L	2
1837	Hon H R Westenra	L	
	Edward Lucas	C	
1841	Hon H R Westenra	L	
	E P Shirley	C	
1843	<u>Westenra succeeds as Lord Rossmore</u>		
	C P Leslie	C	
1847	C P Leslie	C	
	Hon T V Dawson	L	
1852	C P Leslie	C	1948
	Sir George Forster, bt	C	1900
	Dr John Gray	L (Ind)	1409
1857	C P Leslie	C	
	Sir George Forster, bt	C	

⁷³ Listing taken from Walker, Parliamentary Election Results in Ulster, pp 233 and 305.

1859	Col C P Leslie	C	
	Sir George Forster, bt	C	
1865	Col C P Leslie	C	2551
	Hon Vesey Dawson (afterwards		
	Viscount Cremorne)	L	2397
	Sir George Forster, bt	C	2218
	E J Stanley	L	3

Table 2.3 records six elections out of a total of eleven possible contests. This would suggest that there was a growing democratic feeling within the constituency. However, a closer scrutiny of the results indicates that there was a rush of contested elections in the county which stretched from 1826 until 1835. That is, in the first 10 years of this period, a contest was demanded on four of the first five occasions. This would tend to suggest that the easy balance of power which had existed in Monaghan up to the general election of 1826 had been lost on 'Stony Saturday,' and that it took the local magnates almost 10 years to regain it.

The result of the 1826 election was viewed as a great Catholic victory. It was, as already noted, partly the result of the new Catholic organisation. The Catholic Association had become an island-wide system with the implementation by O'Connell of the 'Catholic Rent.' This had opened membership to the Catholic masses with the possibility of associate membership at the cost of one penny a month.⁷⁴ They were led by the priests who were ex officio members. O'Connell indicated his great potential for organisation when he formed, in 1823, the Catholic Association, and within one year had constructed a nationwide system whose only precursor had been the secret society amongst agrarian poor. In many ways O'Connell was taking a Defenders model and uniting it with its natural leadership, the Catholic bourgeoisie and the priesthood. On the Protestant side this process had already been started in 1795 when the Orange Order was formed on the Masonic model with gentry and landocracy leadership.⁷⁵

74 The Catholic rent brought in £8 the first week and over £1,000 per week a year later.

75 The similarities between Orangeism and Masonry are obvious. It has been suggested that it was an outgrowth of the Peep O'Day Boy movement, but there was a conscious attempt to stop Peep O'Day Boys from getting into the movement.

Clashes between these two organisations, the Orange Institution and the Catholic Association would mark the period up to the general election of 1830. Orangeism had come to Monaghan at an early date. A lodge functioned within the Monaghan Militia in 1798,⁷⁶ and in addition, there was a total of 18 other lodges throughout the county.⁷⁷ It has been estimated that the total strength of the order in the county at this time was around 1,000 men.⁷⁸ Unfortunately, the Orange Order in the county is almost without documentation during the first two decades of the nineteenth century. It would not appear to have held a great deal of political strength. The county MP for 1807-1812 and 1813-1818 acted as a Dawson alternate. That is, he was put in by the Dawson family when none of that family was able to take up the position in 1807, did not go forward in 1812 when Dawson succeeded as Viscount Cremorne. Corry was at one time a County Grand Master of Monaghan Orange lodge but this was not enough to ensure election to Westminster.⁷⁹

In the year prior to the general election the government decided to suppress the Catholic Association. However, O'Connell was able to quickly reform it within the new law. Not so the Orange Institution which was also affected by the ban. It reacted with the Brunswick Clubs but these were unsuccessful in attracting either the Orange gentry or the rank and file who felt the Clubs to be too tame. It was only by 1828 that the Clubs started to gain real strength, and by then the Orange Institution was on the verge of reformation. In April of that year, for example, Henry Maxwell, an Orangeman and the MP for the neighbouring constituency of Cavan presented a petition to the House on behalf of the Protestants of that county.⁸⁰

76 Padraig O'Snodaigh, 'Notes on the Volunteers, Militia, Yeomanry and Orangemen of County Monaghan,' in Clogher Record, Vol IX, No 2, p 157.

77 Aiken McClelland, 'Orangeism in Monaghan,' in ibid, No 3, (1978), p 385.

78 O'Snodaigh, 'Volunteers, Militia, Yeomanry and Orangemen of County Monaghan, p 163.

79 Although Corry was unopposed, initially Thomas Barrett Lennard was going to go forward. Lennard spent around £800 but was not nominated. No mention of Orangeism is made in the correspondence; see, Pilip O'Mordha, 'Some Notes on Monaghan History, 1692-1866,' in ibid, No 1, (1976), pp 28-30.

80 Hereward Senior, 'Orangeism in Ireland and Britain,' p 223.

The act against unlawful associations which had been passed in 1825 was allowed to lapse in 1828 and the Orange Institution was reformed at a meeting of the Grand Lodge in September 1828. In that same month the Orangemen of Monaghan became celebrities when under the leadership of a tavern owner in Ballybay they decided to oppose the invasion of Ulster by Jack Lawless. Ireland was in something of a turmoil after O'Connell's famous victory at Clare in July. The Orangemen were animated against Catholic emancipation, but the government recognised that there was no alternative. It was quite a surprise when the annual 12th July demonstration passed off peacefully in the north. This was particularly feared because although the Grand Lodge had reformed, many of the more responsible members of the orange gentry had not reactivated their interest. The rank and file was thus left with a much freer rein than they had had previous to 1825. This was particularly so in Monaghan where a dispute at the beginning of the nineteenth century had caused the county Monaghan lodge to sever all ties with the Grand Lodge for a period of time.⁸¹ It has been suggested that the reason why there was no violent reaction in July, was that,

the Clare election did not, in the manner of the Defenders of 1795, pose a direct threat to the protestant peasants in the border counties. Although they were disturbed by O'Connell's success, they were prepared to await the initiative of the gentry and the placemen whose interests were more immediately threatened. The gentlemen Orangemen, on their part, had to create an organisation which would unite the widest possible protestant sentiment and which was sufficiently⁸² respectable to avoid being suppressed as a secret society.

The situation was thus ripe for an explosion of sectarian conflict; all that was required was specific cause and this would be supplied by O'Connell in September.

In September 1828 O'Connell requested a Belfast solicitor named John Lawless to actively organise branches of the Catholic Association in Ulster. This Lawless undertook to do and he arranged to hold meetings in many of the large towns of the province. He started at Drogheda and Collon before entering county Monaghan for a large meeting in Carrickmacross. Next stop on the agenda was the town of Ballybay, at

81 McClelland, Orangeism in Monaghan, pp 386-387.

82 Senior, Orangeism in Ireland, p 225.

that time in a strongly Protestant and Orange district. Whether in fact, Lawless intended to enter the town or not is unclear. There was no chapel in the town, the Catholics worshipping at Ballintra church about one mile outside of the town. However, once it was learned in Carrickmacross that there was a possibility that the Orangemen of the area would refuse entry to Lawless, that town immediately decided that Ballybay must be entered at all costs.

The leader of the Orange faction within Ballybay was Sam Gray. Apart from his role as leader of the town's Orangemen, Gray also owned the Duke of York hotel in the town, was a tithe proctor, a moneylender and agent for a number of the smaller estates in eastern Cremorne. He officiated at the erection of an Orange arch on the bridge which entered the town and gathered a force of around 5,000 Orangemen there. Any attempt to interfere with the arch would have been a certain cause of trouble.

On the morning of 23 September Lawless left Carrickmacross with a massive crowd drawn from Louth, Meath and south Monaghan. On the way they were met by many smaller bands which joined the throng. By the time they were approaching Ballybay there were estimated to be 100,000 armed Catholics determined to enter the town.⁸³ At the town waited a regiment of Infantry from Clones and a troop of Lancers from Belturbet.⁸⁴ Also there, and in belligerent mood was Gray and a large number of Orangemen. Lawless decided that discretion was the better part of valour and retreated, leaving his 'army' a few miles from the town and unsure of what action to take.⁸⁵ It decided to disperse. Naturally this was viewed as a great Protestant victory in Monaghan. Gray was the hero of the hour and received the freedom of the city of Dublin and a gold box bearing the inscription, 'This box, accompanied by the freedom of the city of Dublin, was presented to Mr Samuel Gray, Ballybay, county Monaghan, for his manly and determined conduct in heading the Protestants of that town when it was threatened to be entered by one of the Popish demagogues,

⁸³ Rushe, Monaghan 1660-1860, p 197. McClelland estimates that the total did not exceed 20,000.

⁸⁴ McClelland, Orangeism in Monaghan, p 388.

⁸⁵ Two of Lawless' supporters were shot outside the town. This resulted in a court case against two Orangemen which proved unsuccessful.

and thereby averting the calamitous occurrences that were likely to ensue from such a rash and daring proceeding.' In addition, he was made a freeman of Drogheda and was presented with a silver box by TCS Corry.⁸⁶

The repulse of Lawless at Ballybay was a great morale booster for the Orangemen of the locality.⁸⁷ There had been very considerable disappointment at the loss of Charles Powell Leslie at the 1826 election. Leslie was an Orangeman, at least nominally, and his replacement by H R Westenra was a sore disappointment. The underlying sectarian tensions within the county were seized upon by the one side or the other as proof of greater prowess or if defeated, then of unprovoked aggression. Throughout the 1820s the town of Clones was a centre for sectarian friction usually centred around fair days, race meetings or party demonstrations. For example, in 1822 an Orangeman was killed by a Catholic at a race meeting and in 1828 another Orangeman was killed by a crowd. A few months later a Catholic was similarly dispatched by the Orangemen of Drum.⁸⁸ In revenge the grave of a notorious Orangeman from the Scotshouse area was desecrated.⁸⁹ And so it went on, the one side reacting against the provocation of the other. As with the period up to the 1868 general election, local sectarian passions in Monaghan were kept inflamed by the great political question of the day. In 1868 it would be Disestablishment of the Irish Church, in the 1826-1830 period it was the question of emancipation of the Catholics.

Catholic emancipation became a virtual certainty when in May 1828 O'Connell was victorious at the polls in county Clare. His opponent, Vesey Fitzgerald, was a popular landlord, and one who was seen to be favourable to Catholic claims. The by-election had been caused by his appointment as president of the Board of Trade. This necessitated his resigning his seat in the House of Commons and then facing an electoral contest. When this was announced it was decided that O'Connell should

86 McClelland, Orangeism in Monaghan, pp 388-389.

87 See Senior, Orangeism in Ireland, pp 223-230. He retired from the province when denied entrance to Armagh city.

88 Livingston, Monaghan Story, p 190.

89 'The Rising of Burke,' as it is known, night of 19-20 February 1828. Burke was a prominent Orangeman from Drumanan area. For a Catholic folk memory of the affair, see, P B O'Mordha, "The Rising of Burke," in Clogher Record, Vol IV, No 1, (1960), pp 50-53.

oppose him. Canvassing of the Forty Shilling Catholic voters was undertaken by the officials of the Catholic Association and the local clergy. When polling commenced the voters were led to the booths in groups by their priests to counter landlord intimidation. After five days Fitzgerald withdrew from the contest and O'Connell was declared the victor, although, of course, he could not take his seat.

The Clare result meant that the Wellington administration was faced with a fait accompli; to continue to refuse emancipation would have threatened the whole fabric of society in Ireland where the Catholic people, emboldened by their success at Clare, might clash with infuriated Orangemen. Similarly, within Westminster there was an air of acquiescence which affected even Peel. Thus when parliament reassembled in February 1829 the speech from the throne included the promise of a bill to relieve the Catholics of their political proscription.

The Act which emancipated Irish Catholics received royal assent in April 1829. Henceforward Catholics would be permitted to sit at Westminster. They also gained the right to hold virtually all offices of state, and by mid-1830s Catholic participation in central and local boards was growing rapidly. But if the Catholic voice was to be heard for the first time at Westminster, Catholic power at the polls was decimated. So as to ease the fears of the Protestants in Ireland, the government coupled the emancipation of Catholics with an act which disfranchised the Forty Shilling Freeholders. Henceforward the right to vote was to be restricted to male citizens who resided upon property valued at 'over £10.' This had the effect of decreasing the electorate in Ireland from over 100,000 to about 16,000.⁹⁰ In Monaghan the electorate fell from over 6,000 to around 1,200. O'Connell and the Catholic Association made the necessary noises about the measure, but the victory for which the Catholic population (or rather its leaders) had struggled could not be denied. The loss of the Forty Shilling Freeholders was but a temporary set-back, and O'Connell's readiness to sacrifice them possibly arose from the conviction that, 'they were too completely under landlord control to act independently.'⁹¹

90 Gearoid O'Tuathaigh, Ireland Before the Famine, (Dublin, 1972), p 74.

91 Beckett, Making of Modern Ireland, p 301.

The effect which Catholic emancipation had upon the electoral process in Monaghan was little. There was no way that a Catholic would be elected to sit for one of the 'Protestant counties of the north.' It would be over half a century later, with the victory of Tim Healy in 1883 before the Catholic electorate of the county could boast one of their own religious persuasion as their representative. The real key to subsequent political activity in Monaghan was the disfranchisement of the Forty Shilling Freeholders. As early as 1823 Henry R Westenra had noted that such a move would virtually wipe out any chance he would have of retaining his seat. This would be as a result of his support for the Catholic cause. The alteration in the franchise requirement tended to Protestantise the electoral register to the obvious detriment of those, like Westenra, who had built a power base upon Catholic votes.⁹² On the other hand, Shirley, although something of an ascendancy Protestant, would also be out of favour because of his only recent residence. Henceforward this could not be counteracted by Catholic tenants voting for their landlord. The 1829 Act, in other words, altered the entire county electoral scene not because it permitted Catholics to sit at Westminster, but because it removed the power base from many of the landed families. With this new definition of electoral competence the aspiring politicians within the ruling elite would have to scramble for the support of the smaller and more Protestant electorate.

This redefinition of the electorate was put to the test in 1830. The electorate was now both small and Protestant. This would decrease the influence of each of the major landlords: Leslie, Shirley, Westenra, Dawson and Blayney. Naturally, the rapid decline in the Catholic vote augured badly for the Liberal camp. The town electors, where valuations were higher, were not reduced in number quite so much. This should have given added strength to Westenra who owned Monaghan town, Lennard who held Clones and Shirley and Bath, each owning half of Carrickmacross. Nicholas Ellis, Lennard's agent, assessed his landlord's interest as

⁹² See above, H R Westenra to Warner William Westenra, 5 April 1823, p 67. H R Westenra saw his political future jeopardised and published 'The case of the Forty Shilling Freeholders of Ireland,' (London, 1929). It was an attempt to motivate that class, but was of no avail. See, Rushe, Monaghan, 1660-1860, pp 206-210.

follows,

This disfranchisement need not injure your interests in the county; it is easy to see how the thing will work, but this is certain that it must raise your interest comparatively with others. The town will acquire a great influence and you have the second town in the county, the first (Monaghan) Lord Rossmore's town having a great many perpetuities, all independent of their landlord. A general election is far off, I will keep my eye on the county and by this time twelve months I will be able to compare the interest. 93

Ellis' appraisal of the situation would appear to have been reasonably accurate. The Westenra interest in Monaghan town helped them to some extent, but they were hampered by the loss of most of the rural vote while at the same time being unsure of urban support. Bath and Lennard had been absentee and without political aspiration of any magnitude. Shirley's loss of the captive tenant vote upon his estates and his Protestant principles in an area where Protestants were virtually non-existent meant that his position was not one of strength. Two rural interests, on the other hand, might now enter the centre of the political arena. Both Blayney and Lucas held land in the fertile parts of the county. Also, farms upon their land tended to be larger - this was particularly true of Lucas. Blayney did lose out to some extent, but he retained interests in Castleblayney which had a fairly large Protestant element within its population. And the Protestants around that town were not renowned for their moderate opinions. For example, in 1829 a group of Catholic migrant workers were attacked and severely beaten as they returned home through Castleblayney.⁹⁴ And the sectarian friction discussed above continued in a number of areas. The town of Augher in south Tyrone also saw attacks upon Catholics, this time the assailants were members of Captain Mountray's yeomanry company.⁹⁵ Clones continued to be an area where sectarian tension was strong, but overall Lennard's agent could note in July 1829 that county Monaghan had been less affected

93 Ellis to Lennard, 13 April 1829, cited in P B O'Mordha, 'Some Notes on Monaghan History (1692-1866),' in Clogher Record, Vol IX, No 1, (1976), p 32.

94 Padraig O Maolagain, 'Party Affray at Castleblayney (1829),' in ibid, Vol V, No 1, (1964), pp 213-221.

95 P Mulligan, 'Affray at Augher (1829), in ibid, No 2, (1965), pp 377-378

than the neighbouring counties of Tyrone, Fermanagh and Armagh.⁹⁶

It was against this background that Monaghan approached the 1830 general election. The contest in 1826 had fractured landlord ranks due to the character of the campaign. The next five years, 1830-1835, saw four of its five elections contested. As would be expected, the two sitting members, Shirley and Westenra came forward for re-election, although both realised that there was considerable doubt as to their ability to retain their seats. They were opposed by Hon Cadwallader Blayney, Colonel Leslie, A G Lewis, Edward Lucas and T C S Corry.

Of these possibles, Leslie decided to contest New Ross where his family also had interests. He was returned unopposed for that constituency.⁹⁷ Edward Lucas whose position had improved vis a vis the other magnates also decided to bide his time. Similarly, T C S Corry, the head of the Monaghan Orangemen decided not to run. This left the incumbents opposed by Blayney and Lewis. Lewis was an inveterate Tory. Arthur Gamble Lewis held lands at Inniskeen in south-east Monaghan. He was a Deputy-Lieutenant for the county but his wife, Henrietta, was the daughter of Henry Owen Scott of Scotstown, a relict of Richard Westenra, the brother of H R Westenra.⁹⁸ This could mean that Lewis was started by someone in the Westenra interest to give tenants a candidate for whom to poll their second votes.

The field would appear to have started to narrow by July. In a letter from Ellis to Lennard dated some time in that month, he noted that Leslie, Blayney, Lucas and Corry were still in the running.⁹⁹ However, a subsequent letter from H R Westenra suggests that Leslie will probably decide not to contest the seat. By now it was only five weeks to polling on 18 August. The field appears to have narrowed still further with no mention of the other candidates by the time that H R Westenra is writing to Lennard. On 7 July he had written to Lennard from the

⁹⁶ O'Mordha, 'Some Notes on Monaghan History,' Ellis to Lennard, 27 July, p 46.

⁹⁷ Walker, Parliamentary Election Results in Ireland, p 233.

⁹⁸ Stenton and Lees, Parliamentary Fact Book, Vol II, biography of H O Lewis, p 237. Agent for Westenra interest in Monaghan.

⁹⁹ O'Mordha, 'Some Notes on Monaghan History,' Ellis to Lennard, July 1830, p 33.

House of Commons asking for support in the forthcoming contest.¹⁰⁰

This must have been immediately forthcoming because two days later, Westenra wrote again to Lennard stating that he felt that Colonel Leslie would not again contest the seat. He continued,

I was anxious to have understood what were your feelings with respect to the other candidates. Mr Blayney stands on Liberal principles and he has got the Cremorne interest. He in consequence, I . . . will come in. Mr Shirley's principles I conceive to be the reverse of Liberal, and I am rather inclined to think that the declaration of your interest . . . of your humble servant (who is almost grown grey in your service) and Mr Blayney might, in the first degree, prevent a contest. I should not have ventured to intimate my observation of this kind on your notice, had you not been so kind as to speak to me in the subject, and prove to me in so very . 101 the interest you took in my success.

From this it is clear that the unhappiness which Cremorne felt as to Westenra's supporting the Tories had finally forced him to break the link and give his interest to another candidate. Blayney's ability to attract Cremorne to his side was clearly the factor which persuaded him to contest the election after he had reneged four years earlier. With Cremorne behind him and the support of his own tenants around Castle-blayney, Blayney could feel fairly confident that he would be elected. This was an opinion which was also held by Westenra. Consequently it was imperative that Westenra maximise his support from other quarters. To this end he had been acting in the interest of Lennard. The bracketed comment in the letter above, "(who is almost grown grey in your service)" suggests that Westenra had lost the backing of Cremorne some considerable time previously, and that he had been courting Lennard for a long period.

News that Lennard had decided to support Westenra would please Ellis. He had written three times by July 12 asking whom he should instruct the tenants to support, in one letter stating that he was afraid to go to Lisnaroe until he knew who was to be the favoured candidate.

This now left the three candidates in fairly equal positions. Blayney, however, with the Cremorne interest behind him was in the strongest position. If voting went according to expectations then the real contest was to be between Shirley and Westenra for the second seat. The key factor would be which way the Blayney supporters cast their second

100 Ibid, H R Westenra to Lennard, 7 July, 1830.

101 Ibid, H R Westenra to Lennard, 9 July, 1830.

votes. Thus both candidates attempted to make pacts with Blayney. Shirley had the support of the Orange party which was strong in the west of the county. And having voted against the repeal of the Test Act he could expect little support from the Presbyterians.¹⁰²

When polling commenced there were five candidates, Blayney, Shirley and H R Westenra, but also A G Lewis and Hon J C Westenra. Lewis' position has already been discussed,¹⁰³ but his political stance is unclear. The family was connected to the Westenra interest through his wife's family, but he was an inveterate Tory. Also, he held his lands in the Inniskeen area which is in south-east Farney, not far from the Shirley estate. It is possible, then, that he was started in the Shirley interest so as to give his tenants an opportunity to vote secondly for Lewis. At this time, as the 1826 result had indicated, a landlord might expect his tenant to vote for him with his first vote, but he might not expect him to refrain from voting. Lewis was probably there to stop the Protestant tenantry from voting for either of the other two candidates.

The reason for J C Westenra being on the register is also a mystery in the face of a complete lack of substantiating evidence. He was a brother of H R Westenra.¹⁰⁴ Whether J C Westenra was put forward to take support away from his brother, or as with Lewis, to give tenants a second candidate to vote for, is unclear. However, the Lennard correspondence gives some clues.

In Westenra's letter to Lennard on 9 July he stated that it was his opinion that Blayney with Cremorne and he with Lennard support would place each in such an impregnable position that there might not be a contest.¹⁰⁵ When this was forthcoming to the extent that Ellis acted

¹⁰² Ibid, Anonymous Proclamation attacking Leslie and Shirley. It makes the point that Shirley voted against abolition of the Test Act.

¹⁰³ See above, p 89.

¹⁰⁴ Hon John Craven Westenra, 1798-1874. Son of Second Lord Rossmore, and brother of H R Westenra, he resided at Sharavogue Castle, King's County. Had few interests in Monaghan. He unsuccessfully contested that county in 1831, being successful in 1835. He held the seat until he retired in 1852.

¹⁰⁵ O'Mordha, 'Some Notes on Monaghan History,' H R Westenra to Lennard, 9 July, 1830, p 33.

as Westenra's election agent in the Clones area,¹⁰⁶ he approached Blayney and asked him to enter into a pact which should be kept secret until the day of the poll. Blayney, on the other hand, was playing both ends against the middle, for he must also have been in alliance with Shirley. Blayney issued three directives to his tenants: the first that they should vote for Westenra, a second that they should not vote against Westenra opening the way for neutrality, and finally that they should support Shirley.¹⁰⁷ The key to this double-dealing was the prolonged manner of polling in elections at that time. Once polling commenced, it continued until every available vote had been tallied or one or more of the competitors withdrew. H R Westenra did not withdraw until the seventh day. Blayney had cleverly held his voters from the polls until the fifth day at which point most Westenra supporters had voted, giving Blayney their second votes. Needless to say, Westenra was not amused; he asserted that if each had stood independently then he would have been returned. He had been well out-manoeuvred and had paid the penalty. Another reason why Westenra had been defeated was that his father, Lord Rossmore's support for Catholic emancipation had become so intense over the previous period that he had alienated large numbers of Protestant electors. His letter attacking the Protestant Ascendancy which he termed '... the evil genius of Ireland, whose principle it is to govern her under the sword.'¹⁰⁸ This caused a reaction against the son which led to his defeat. As Ellis noted,

It is very hard that the sins of the father should be visited on the son. The fact is that Lord Rossmore by his publications, his speeches, has so galled the feelings of almost all the country, that hostility to him much more than any favour for Mr Shirley was¹⁰⁹ the activating principle on this occasion.

106 Ibid, Ellis to Lennard, 3 August, 1830, pp 33-34.

107 Livingston, Monaghan Story, p 194.

108 British Museum Press Mark, pp 3557W, 'Lord Rossmore's Letter on Catholic Emancipation,' cited in Rushe, Monaghan 1660-1860, pp 198-205.

109 O'Mordha, 'Some Notes on Monaghan History,' Ellis to Lennard, 20 August, 1830, pp 34-35.

The result left the representation of the county entirely in the hands of the Tories. Although Cremorne was supposedly a Liberal he could not be expected to aid any move which would be brought about to unseat Blayney who was his nominee. In any case, it must be remembered that party labels meant little in the first third of the nineteenth century. Cremorne after all had been willing to support T C S Corry for the seat although he was the County Grand Master of the Orangemen. Similarly, Cadwallader Blayney's father, Lord Blayney, by now a very old man, was close to Cremorne politically.¹¹⁰ In any case, Blayney and Shirley, now in alliance, in the same way as Westenra and Leslie had hoped to unite, were in particularly strong positions.

This being the case, it was surprising that Shirley decided not to contest the seat in 1831. He had expended a considerable amount of money and effort winning the seat in 1826, even to the extent of destroying his relationships with his tenantry in the process, was successful again in 1830, but when the general election took place in 1831 he did not go forward. As a result, Blayney and Westenra came forward and were returned unopposed.

By the time of the general election of 1832 the Tithe War was already under way. The tithes which were collected for the established church were a constant irritant to both Catholic and Dissenter. Justin McCarthy claimed later that due to the tithes issue, 'A miserable, petty civil war was always smouldering.'¹¹¹ At the end of 1830 a tithe proctor seized the cattle of Father Martin Doyle, PP of Craigenamanagh on the Kilkenny/Carlow border. Doyle attacked the system from the pulpit and he was supported in this by the bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, Bishop James Doyle. The spark kindled there, quickly spread and in January 1831 at Newtownbarry, county Wexford, a confrontation between a Catholic crowd and the yeomen at a cattle sale left 12 dead.¹¹² By 1832 over £1,000,000 was outstanding, and the cost of lifting £12,000 had been

¹¹⁰ See above, pp 90.

¹¹¹ Justin McCarthy, The Epoch of Reform, 1830-1850, (London, 1882), p 96.

¹¹² D J Hickey and J E Doherty, A Dictionary of Irish History Since 1800, (Dublin, 1980), pp 561-562.

£27,000.¹¹³ In addition, violence increased with 242 homicides in that year alone. The Irish Church Temporalities Act of 1833 did nothing to ease the problem, and the ferment continued with acceptable bills being thrown out by the House of Lords in 1834 and 1837 before the Tithe Commutation Act was passed in 1838. It removed the tithe proctor, always a source of tension, and place the tithe upon the rent where it would be lifted unobtrusively by the landlord whose church it supported.

There was no great violence in Monaghan over the tithe issue, although it was a subject which elicited strong opposition from Catholics wherever they lived. It led to a growth in Catholic defender type organisations which, in turn, stimulated Orangeism. In neighbouring Cavan the year opened with sectarian attacks upon Protestants at Crosskeys and Clifferna.¹¹⁴ At the latter place an attack was made upon an Orange parade by a band of Defenders near the local Chapel which they thought was to be attacked. In the early summer difficulties arose over an attempt by the local Protestant curate to lift the tithe in the Stradone area. However, Orange parades on 1 July at Virginia, Ballyjamesduff, Arva, Killeshandra and Milltown passed off peacefully. In Cavan town an Orange parade also passed off without violence although the Orangemen disrupted the summer assize by drumming outside the courthouse. The Catholics in turn responded with a massive demonstration on 21 July from Lavey Strand to the county town. The significance of these proceedings were not lost on the people of south Ulster, and it is worth noting that this was the first time since February 1690 that a 'Catholic body had made a triumphal march through the Farnham stronghold.'¹¹⁵

All this time the county of Monaghan had remained peaceful. The tithe issue, however, did cause a stir in the county although not in the same way as it had in Cavan. In 1831 the curate at Tyholland had been unable to collect his tithes, and this was the first instance of refusal of the tithe in Monaghan.¹¹⁶ Similar occurrences took place in the parish

113 J C Beckett, Making of Modern Ireland, p 310.

114 Rev T P Cunningham, 'The Lavey Green Walk,' in Breifne, Vol II, No 1, (1963), pp 308-309.

115 Ibid, p 317.

116 Rushe, Monaghan 1660-1860, p 212.

of Monaghan and almost everywhere in Farney.¹¹⁷ Around Ballybay where Sam Gray was the tithe proctor, violence some times resulted; in one case a Catholic was shot dead.¹¹⁸ In the Clones area the proctor, a brother of the Catholic Bishop Kernan, was less unfortunate, and his family connection placed the bishop in an invidious position.¹¹⁹

In addition to the Tithe War which was waging throughout the island, the south of the province also had the agitation which was caused by the Second Reformation. It was inaugurated in Cavan town in 1827 by John Maxwell Barry the Fifth baron Farnham.¹²⁰ The movement has had various degrees of success attributed to it. It has been claimed, for instance, that 1,483 Catholics saw the error of their ways and joined the Church of Ireland.¹²¹ On the other hand, Catholic sources suggest that only 42 Catholics were converted. There was a considerable amount of animosity shown towards converts by their neighbours and erstwhile co-religionists, and it seems certain that there was a certain amount of reconquest of lost souls. In any case, it was seen as such a threat, that a special conference of bishops was held in Dublin in December and a deputation was sent to Cavan. This movement, whether of more than passing success or not managed to retain passions about all things religious at a maximum.

It was to this background that Monaghan approached the 1832 general election. It was the great reform election which was fought on the grounds of whether or not the proposed Reform Act should be passed. In April 1831 the government of Earl Grey fell on a vote on one of the clauses of the proposed bill. This had led to the general election of 1831. Once returned to power the measure continued, but the determination of the House of Lords to alter the terms of the bill forced Grey to go

117 Livingston, Monaghan Story, pp 198-199.

118 Rushe, Monaghan 1660-1860, p 213.

119 Mulligan, 'Life and Times of Bishop Edward Kernan,' p 328.

120 John Maxwell Barry, 1767-1838. He was related through Judith who married John Maxwell the First Baron in 1719 and was the daughter of James Barry of Newton Barry, county Wexford. The Fifth Baron married Juliana, daughter of Earl Mountnorris. She died in 1833 and he five years later, without issue. He was succeeded by his brother.

121 Eileen McCourt, 'The Management of the Farnham Estates During the Nineteenth Century,' in Breifne, Vol IV, No 16 (1973-1975), p 540.

again to the country.¹²² Thus, another general election was fought in December 1832.

Blayney and Westenra who had been returned unopposed in 1831 again sought return to the House of Commons. However, this time, Westenra was unable to count upon the support of the major Liberal political organisation in the county, the Independent Club. Westenra's stance over the Tithe War was not satisfactory and they determined to place a Liberal of an entirely different stamp upon the top of the poll. The friction between Westenra and the local Liberals finally came to a head at a meeting at Ballybay in 1832 when Westenra's closest allies stormed out of the gathering.¹²³ The Liberals chose Louis Perrin, a Dublin lawyer to represent their interest.¹²⁴ This now made a three cornered fight certain.

Amongst the supporters of Mr Perrin was the youthful Charles Gavan Duffy, then a boy of 16 years. Duffy supported Perrin whom he described as the nominee of the Liberal Club, 'practically the Catholic electors.' He particularly made himself disagreeable to the Rossmore agent, Colonel Lewis, who had stood in 1830 as a decoy candidate. It is unclear how significant the young Duffy's support was, but it resulted in his family losing their leases of a number of properties within the town of Monaghan. These properties, the rent of which the family enjoyed, were up for new leases after the election and Lewis stated that, ". . . he would not continue as tenants a family which reared such a fire-brand."¹²⁵

With the support of the Conservative and Protestant voters of the county Blayney was able to head the poll. The Liberal vote, split between the two candidates, held the key to who would gain the second seat. Neither Perrin nor Westenra could expect support from the Protestant

122 Beales, From Castlereagh to Gladstone, pp 26-27.

123 Livingston, Monaghan Story, p 196.

124 Rt Hon Louis Perrin. A Dublin barrister who died in 1864. In favour of repeal if Ireland could not gain justice. Elected for Dublin City in 1831 but unseated on petition, he sat for Monaghan until 1835 when he won Cashel. He was appointed Attorney General and Puisne Justice in 1835 and retired from politics.

125 Gavan Duffy, My Life in Two Hemispheres, (London, 1898), p 23.

voters. The electorate for the election totalled 2,139.¹²⁶ Each elector had two votes, which made a total vote of 4,278. The result of the poll was as Follows: Blayney, 1,454 votes, Perrin, 1,039 and Westenra, 1,005. The total vote cast was thus 3,498, which leaves 780 votes unaccounted for, or 390 voters. If it can be assumed that around 90% of the electorate voted, a not unusual turnout, then this accounts for 224 voters. This would leave a total of 166 plumpers. This would be a very small number, unless the poll was, in fact, much higher than 90%. In any case, the Protestants were in the majority upon the register, and it is certain that the Liberal voters, by and large, voted for both Westenra and Perrin. The alternative that everyone plumped would make a Catholic vote of 2,044 which is almost the size of the entire register. The case would appear to be that by and large, the Catholics used both their votes. The Protestants, on the other hand, tended to plump for Blayney. There would have been no cross voting by Protestants for Perrin. However, some Rossmore tenants may have voted both for the Conservative and their landlord. Catholics, as stated above, used both their votes, but there was a proportion who decided to plump for Perrin. The number of Perrin plumpers must have been greater than the number of Protestants who gave Westenra their second votes. The result was that Blayney and Perrin were elected. Clearly, the Catholics were not in a position, as has been asserted,¹²⁷ to return two Liberal candidates.

In 1834 the aged Lord Blayney died and his son succeeded to the title. His vacancy was sought by Westenra again and Edward Lucas. As a distant cousin of the Blayneys he could expect to receive some of the support which that family controlled. He had supported Westenra upon 1830 in return for a pledge that when Leslie of Glaslough retired that he would be supported in the Conservative interest.¹²⁸ Westenra again came forward as a Liberal, and presumably the Independent Club endorsed him against Lucas. When the poll was announced Westenra had achieved his ambition to regain his lost seat at Westminster. The result was, Westenra, 1,078

¹²⁶ Electorate figure is taken from Walker, Parliamentary Election Results in Ireland, p 305.

¹²⁷ This assertion is made by Livingston in Monaghan Story, p 196 where he attributes 1,415 votes to Perrin, 1,002 to Blayney, and 959 to Westenra.

¹²⁸ See above, p 89.

and Lucas, 984. However, a petition was lodged by Lucas and as a result Westenra's poll was amended to 973 votes and Lucas was declared elected.

Monaghan had experienced a hitherto unknown degree of political activity in the period since 1830. The year following the unseating of Westenra another general election was called. Disagreement over the appropriation of Church funds for other purposes resulted in four resignations from Grey's cabinet in May and led to his retirement in July. The Home Secretary, Viscount Melbourne, took over as Prime Minister but due to the King's refusal to have Russell Speaker of the House of Commons another general election was required. Thus, the people of Monaghan went to the polls once again in December 1835.

By nomination day there were four candidates in the field, Westenra and Lucas, and two newcomers, W E Hudson and David Leslie. These latter both stood as Liberal candidates, indicating that the Liberals of the county continued to be unhappy with Westenra. Neither candidate need be taken seriously as the results suggest. Leslie, one of the Ballybay family, received two votes whilst Hudson got 66 votes. Lucas topped the poll with 912 votes with Westenra receiving a total of 733. The representation of the county was therefore shared between the Liberals and the Tories.

With the election over, Monaghan had completed a period within which it had seen four contested elections and one successful unseating upon petition out of a total of five elections in six years. Only 10 constituencies saw four or more contests in this period. Of these, five were city and five county seats.¹²⁹ The seats in question were, like Monaghan, constituencies where the balance of power had been disturbed by the 1829 Act; not in so far as it related to Catholics but in its removal of the Forty Shilling Freehold vote in the counties. In Monaghan this act depleted the electoral resources of some of the landowners, whilst it comparatively aided those of others. Thus Lucas comes into

¹²⁹ The counties were, Wexford, five out of six contested elections, Clare, five out of five, Carlow, four out of six, Monaghan, four out of five and Mayo, four out of four. The cities were, Dungarvan, six out of eight, Drogheda, four out of six, Dublin, five out of five, Cork, four out of five, and Derry four out of five.

a position to challenge for one of the seats in his own right. Shirley, and to a lesser extent, Westenra, lost what could have been a stranglehold upon the parliamentary representation of the county. By 1835 this balance had been redressed and once again there could be a truce between the two parties and the four or five major interests within Monaghan county.

The lull in electoral contests in Monaghan stretched through until the 1852 general election. Lucas and Westenra remained at Westminster until 1841 when Lucas retired.¹³⁰ He was appointed Under Secretary of State for Ireland by Sir Robert Peel, but retired in August 1845 from that post. His place was filled by Evelyn Philip Shirley, the eldest son of Evelyn John Shirley who had been elected in 1826. Evelyn Philip Shirley was returned unopposed in 1841. Two years later Westenra was elevated to the peerage upon the death of his father William Warner Westenra. This forced a by-election which returned Charles Powell Leslie unopposed.¹³¹ The fact that Westenra, a Liberal, was replaced by Leslie who was a Tory indicates that the alliance within Monaghan politics was formed between family interests and not political parties.¹³² This point was further underlined in 1847 when S P Shirley retired and his place was taken by a Whig, Hon Vesey Dawson.¹³³ Once again there was no contest. Dawson sat until the general election of 1852 when he retired.

130 Rt Hon Edward Lucas, 1787-1871. Justice of Peace, and High Sheriff for county 1817, Was MP for Monaghan 1834-1841, and Under Secretary of State for Ireland, 1841-1846. Made Privy Councillor, 1845. Married Anne, daughter of William Ruxton, MP for Ardee, in 1812.

131 Evelyn Philip Shirley, 1812-1882. Was MP for Monaghan, 1841-1847, and later for Warwickshire South, 1853-1865. Son of Evelyn John Shirley, MP Monaghan, 1826-1831 and Warwickshire South, 1836-1849. Married Maria, daughter of Sir Edmund H Lechmere Bart, of Worcester. Educated at Magdalene College, Oxford. Deputy-Lieutenant of Warwickshire 1860.

132 Charles Powell Leslie, 1821-1871. Lord Lieutenant and Custos Rotulorum of Monaghan. Colonel of Monaghan Militia. Was unmarried; he sat for the county from 1842-1871, when succeeded by his brother John.

133 Hon Thomas Vesey Dawson, 1819-1854. Son of second Lord Cremorne. In 1851 married Augusta, daughter of John Wilson Fitzpatrick. Promoted Captain in Coldstream Guards in 1843 and Colonel unattached in 1845. MP for Louth 1841-1847 and for Monaghan 1847-1852. Killed at Battle of Inkerman, 5 November, 1854.

In the period 1830-1835, Monaghan saw four contested elections. However, from 1835-1852, a period of 17 years, there were no contests at all. The territorial magnates were able to make agreements between themselves as to who would sit at Westminster for the county. This process was aided by the fact that there was no Dawson or Leslie in a position to succeed to the Westminster seat and the Shirley family, on the other hand, had a larger interest in Warwickshire than Monaghan and they had thus a choice of seat.

The electoral peace was shattered in 1852 at the Tenant right general election. The death of O'Connell in 1847 had taken much of the impetus out of the Repeal Association. The debacle in Widow McCormack's cabbage patch in 1848 stirred little emotion in south Ulster although some of the leaders of young Ireland, notably Gavan Duffy from Monaghan town, were from that area. The famine had seen a massive reduction in the population of Monaghan,¹³⁴ and advanced nationalism of the stamp of Smith O'Brien and John Mitchel was not relevant. Rural society was still in the grips of the famine, and the resultant social upheaval made revolutionary endeavour a non-starter. However, a reformist movement directed towards the rural inequality of landlord and tenant relations could prove successful. In 1847 Sharman Crawford sponsored a bill in Westminster for the legalising of Ulster tenant-right. It was heavily defeated, 112 votes to 25. This indicated just how weak was the foundation of Ulster Tenant Right. This parliamentary defeat plus the activities of landlords like Shirley at Carrickmacross and the Marquis of Hertford in county Antrim, gave further impetus to the movement. In the south, two Catholic curates, O'Keeffe and Shea, formed a tenants association at Callan in county Kilkenny in 1849, and by July 1850 20 similar societies has been instituted throughout the south.¹³⁵ The tenant farmers in Ulster, often members of the Presbyterian faith, got support for their cause from four of the five presbyteries, and then the General Assembly petitioned parliament in favour of the tenants' demands.¹³⁶

¹³⁴ See Chapter I above.

¹³⁵ Lee, Modernisation of Irish Society, p 39.

¹³⁶ Livingston, Monaghan Story, p 224.

The Tenant League quickly established itself in county Monaghan. On 11 January 1848 the local Presbyterian Minister at Derryvalley organised a tenant meeting in Ballybay. Among the speakers was Sharman Crawford, Rev David Bell, himself, William Jackson from Ballybay, Hamilton McMath of Castleblayney and Rev Edward McGowan, one of the Catholic Curates at Carrickmacross. From this beginning the tenant farmers of county Monaghan started to build, but it would be 1850 before a strong county Organisation would be founded. In January 1850, meetings organised by the landlords were held in both Monaghan and Cavan counties to protest at the loss of the Corn Laws and calling for the reintroduction of protection. The Cavan meeting went off without any hitch,¹³⁷ but the Monaghan assembly was virtually taken over by Bell and the Parish Priest of Aughnamullen, Father Brennan. They argued that protection would ensure that already exorbitant rents would remain or be increased for a tenantry which was nearly in a position of penury due to the famine and the rent scale. This event marked the opening of the tenant right campaign in the county. On 23 January a large meeting was held in Kingscourt, just over the boundary with Cavan.¹³⁸ In February the people of Ballybay presented Rev Bell with a testimonial,¹³⁹ and in the same month the Inneskeen Tenant Protection Society was formed by the local Parish Priest.¹⁴⁰ Large meetings were also held in Navan and county Louth in June, and on July 29 a large meeting was held in Cavan town. It was called after a large requisition to the High Sheriff of the county, Hon Henry Cavendish Butler, was rejected. Among others, the document was signed by 24 Catholic clerics and five Presbyterian ministers. This suggests that the movement was to some extent non-sectarian, although too much emphasis has been placed upon this point. There were no notable Anglican clerics.¹⁴¹ Gavan Duffy has stressed¹⁴² that it was a non-sectarian movement uniting both northern and southern

¹³⁷ Rev T P Cunningham, 'The Cavan Tenant Right Meeting of 1850,' in Breifne, Vol III, No 12, (1969), p 417.

¹³⁸ Cunningham, Breifne, Vol III, No 12, p 417.

¹³⁹ Livingston, Monaghan Story, p 225.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Cunningham, Breifne, Vol III, No 12, p 421.

¹⁴² See, for example, his League of North and South, (London, 1886).

Ireland, however, it has been suggested that, "It would be more accurate to describe the League as a southern movement with a few northern allies of doubtful reliability."¹⁴³

After the formation of the Tenant League in Dublin in August 1850, the local branches of the tenants movement affiliated. Branches in Castleblayney, Carrickmacross, Inniskeen, Clones, Newbliss and Ballybay set about organising a large tenants' meeting in Ballybay at which it was hoped to form a county association. A large meeting was organised for August and over 30,000 people attended. The Dundalk Democrat carried the following editorial,

Never did a race of human beings need glad tidings as much at this time as the people of county Monaghan. The landlords of Monaghan with scarcely an exception, are the worst in the country . . . The character of the landlords is such not only to make the angels weep but even to hate the very form and shape of man. A chronicle of what the tenant farmers of Monaghan have suffered would be almost impossible. The bondage of the Israelites was nothing compared to theirs. The relations between landlords and tenants in county Monaghan are those which exist between the Highwayman and his victims. 144

The meeting was a great success but just as the movement in the county should have been going from strength to strength, internal dissension severely weakened it. On the national scene the controversy engendered by the Ecclesiastical Titles Act of 1851 which forbade the newly established Catholic hierarchy from utilising titles already in use by Anglican clerics, inflamed sectarian passions. It diverted some Catholic enthusiasm away from the tenant movement, and in turn, it alienated some erstwhile Presbyterian supporters of the movement as fear of Popery spread.

With the organisation rocked by this controversy, the infant movement in the county was scarcely able to withstand the difficulties which arose in the centre of Monaghan tenant radicalism, Ballybay. A clash of personalities between John J Hughes of Ballybay and Rev David Bell grew particularly acrimonious. Hughes charged that the forthcoming meeting at which Dr McKnight and Rev John Rodgers were to speak should

¹⁴³ J H Whyte, The Tenant League and Irish Politics in the eighteenthfifties, (Dundalk, 1972), p 8.

¹⁴⁴ Dundalk Democrat, 28 September, 1850, cited in Livingston, Monaghan Story, p 226.

be presided over by Rev Goodwin, Parish Priest of Ballybay, and not by Ball's friend, Rev Brennan, PP of Aughnamullen. In addition, there was a query as to the manner in which the expenses of the League were being spent by the Bell faction, and whether Bell's desire to hold the meeting in the late Sam Gray's Duke of York Hotel was wise. Bell solved this question by preempting all discussion by having placards posted with the York marked as venue. The Hughes faction boycotted the meeting and when the League Headquarters suggested that a second branch be formed in Ballybay, Bell would not countenance it.¹⁴⁵

This rift within the movement, however, was healed and by 1852 the movement was once again fighting for the cause of the tenant farmers of Monaghan. With the approach of a general election, it was decided that the tenant farmers of the county needed a Tenant League candidate to vote for. It was decided that Dr John Gray, one of the leaders of the new movement, should be selected. He was particularly keen to stand at the election and delighted at the opportunity to represent that constituency. Although Gray¹⁴⁶ was born in county Mayo, his father was originally from Ballybay where he had been involved in the United Irishmen.¹⁴⁷ On the face of it, he appeared to be an excellent candidate.

Against Gray came one of the sitting members, Charles Powell Leslie, and Sir George Forster of Coolderry, Carrickmacross.¹⁴⁸ In addition, a Mr Lane Joynt of Monaghan town also presented himself. At nomination day he made a short speech and then withdrew his nomination. Leslie was proposed by Edward Lucas, the former MP and seconded by Captain Richardson of Monaghan town.¹⁴⁹ Forster was proposed by Charles French of Ballybay

¹⁴⁵ An account of this episode in addition to a short history of Bell is found in, Thomas Bell, 'The Rev David Bell,' in Clogher Record, Vol VI, No 3, (1967), pp 253-276.

¹⁴⁶ Sir John Gray, 1816-1875. Born at Claremorris, county Mayo. Educated at Glasgow University, MD 1839, Editor and proprietor of Freeman's Journal. Tried and sentenced with O'Connell in 1844. In 1863 he was knighted, and sat for Kilkenny City from 1865 until his death.

¹⁴⁷ John A McIvor, Extracts From a Ballybay Scrapbook, (Monaghan, 1974), p 5.

¹⁴⁸ Biography of Sir George Forster can be found on p 116, n 208.

¹⁴⁹ The Richardson Family lived at Popular Vale. Descended from Simon Richardson who came to Monaghan in 1667. Edward Richardson was a member of the First Ulster Unionist Council.

House who was the proprietor of the town¹⁵⁰ and seconded by Thomas Coote of Brandrum Demesne.¹⁵¹

The election was a particularly hard fought affair. The strategy followed by Forster of getting French to propose him was clearly an attempt to pressurise the French tenants in the Ballybay area to vote for him. If the tenant voting strength could be eroded in the League core support area of Ballybay, then Gray would lose. The increased sectarian passions which had been excited by the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill and also by the Stockport riots of 28 and 29 June were not conducive to inter-group voting. Further, the fact that the campaign and the polling took place in the middle of July when religious identification was greatest worked against Gray. In any case, it has been claimed that of the 100 Presbyterians who signed Gray's requisition requesting that he contest the seat, only 11 actually voted for him. The landlords united in the face of the threat of tenant radicalism.

. . . Lord Rossmore issued circulars commanding his tenants to vote for the two conservative candidates. Anketel (sic), who had the reputation of carefully trimming his sails to whatever breeze¹⁵² might blow from Rossmore Park acted in a similar manner.

Further evidence of landlord pressure at the time of the Monaghan election was indicated by correspondence between Henry de Burgh and one of his tenants which was published in the Dublin Daily Express. His tenant, John Murphy of Skeghorn, Clones had voted against his wishes at the election. In consequence, de Burgh informed his agent that Murphy pay immediately 'all rent justly due and payable, without pressure or hardship.'¹⁵³ When Murphy replied that this would cause him considerable hardship, de Burgh wrote back,

150 The French estates eventually passed to the Leslies of Ballybay who retained the home until it was destroyed by Republicans in 1922.

151 Thomas Coote of Brandrum became a 'cause celebre' in Monaghan politics at the time of the 1868 election. See below, pp 186-7.

152 Freeman's Journal, 2 February, 1852, cited in Anthony K Hanrahan, Irish Electioneering; 1850-1872, unpublished MA thesis, (UCD, 1965), p 11.

153 Henry de Burgh letter to Dublin Daily Express, 19 August, 1852.

You refused your landlord the compliment of your vote. Be it so. Let there be no compliments between us. Vote as you please; but pay up your rents to the day they are usually payable, or I shall make you. No doubt but your political supporters will grant you¹⁵⁴ the favour that I refuse. . .

This sort of activity, or the threat of it, was not uncommon in the nineteenth century. De Burgh suggested that all Irish landlords should combine in this manner and ensure that the necessary compliment be paid to the lord of the land. If his advice was taken then he felt assured that 'the priests would soon be considered by their flocks as the political vampires they unquestionably are.'¹⁵⁵

Naturally, the Catholic clergy felt that their activities were not the results of political vampiredom. The attitude of the hierarchy was summed up in an article in the Dublin Review which appeared in 1872 under the title 'The Priesthood at Irish Elections.' It argued,

The landlord . . . puts pressure on his tenants . . . that they may vote against their convictions, but the priest puts pressure on his flock, that they may vote in accordance with it. Thus the electional influence of the priests in itself is conducive to political morality, with whatever regrettable or even deplorable extrinsic circumstances it may be occasionally mixed up; whereas the influence of the landlords (we are speaking exclusively of Catholic Ireland) is in its very essence tyrannical, oppressive,¹⁵⁶ unjust.

This article, it should be remembered, was written in 1872, by which time the county constituencies had been politicised. The great political battles of the 1850s were fought in the boroughs where the shopkeepers and gombeenmen were becoming increasingly important.¹⁵⁷ In the counties, the 1850s was, according to one scholar, an era where the landlord's influence once more reached the heights.¹⁵⁸ But the priests were still a factor to be reckoned with at this period. The proscription

154 Henry de Burgh to John Murphy, 16 August, 1852, published in ibid.

155 Henry de Burgh, letter to Dublin Daily Express, 17 August, 1852, published 19 August, 1852.

156 Cited in Hanrahan, Irish Electioneering, p 2.

157 T Hoppen, "National Politics and Local Realities in Mid-Nineteenth Century Ireland," in A Cosgrave and D McCarthy eds, Studies in Irish History Presented to R Dudley Edwards, (Dublin, 1979), pp 192-197.

158 J H Whyte, Influence of the Catholic Clergy on Elections, p 249.

of electoral activity by the hierarchy in 1829 after the achievement of emancipation was often broken, but the significance of priestly influence lessened by the fact that the clergy was often split between various candidates. Thus the Conservatives gained an overall majority in 1859 although faced with widespread clerical activity.¹⁵⁹ Nor could the anti-Tory movements expect universal Catholic support. The local bishops were not united on political issues any more than were their clergy. Thus with the death of O'Connell, it has been suggested that the bishops were,

like barons, come into being in a phase of centralised feudalism,¹⁶⁰ surviving in a succeeding phase of feudal particularism.

Their loss of direction led to an increase in the process of particularisation which had overtaken the Irish constituencies. Needless to say, this was especially so in the larger rural constituencies.

Monaghan was typical of the Irish political scene at the time. The clerical activity at the 1852 election was, indeed, much greater than normal. However, the previous year's split within tenant ranks had seriously weakened the movement, and may have made it a prey to sectarianism. The landlords recognised that there was a grave threat to their hegemony and they pulled together. The Liberal or Whig landlords appear to have been favourably disposed to the two Conservative candidates. This may have been a result of their keeping an eye to the future. After all, landlord income was based upon rents, and widespread evictions for refusal to support candidates of the landlords' choice would hit their pockets. Similarly, elections were becoming more and more expensive, and many of the younger members of the territorial families could ill-afford the cost of contested elections. Thus the landlords tended to rely upon the threat of eviction rather than its implementation to keep the tenantry in order, and to agree on candidates with their peers. The victory of Sir John Gray would have meant that one of the seats was lost to the landlord class. It would also undermine the Whig position. Thus it was in the interests of the Whig magnates like Rossmore and Cremorne

¹⁵⁹ Whyte claims that the priests could only lead where their flocks wished to go, were divided between moderate older priests and radical young curates. See ibid, pp 239-259.

¹⁶⁰ Oliver Mac Donagh, 'The Politicisation of the Irish Catholic Bishops, 1800-1850,' in The Historical Journal, Vol XVIII, (1975), p 52.

to remain neutral or support the Tories in 1852. Another factor may have been the fact that the perennially absent Marquis of Bath decided to support Sir George Forster instead of Vesey Dawson.¹⁶¹

When the poll was announced Leslie was at the head with a total vote of 1,948. He was followed by Forster who collected 1,9000 votes. Gray was in third place with a disappointing 1,409. This election saw the end of the Tenant League in the county. Not a single Tenant League candidate had been successful in Ulster. In the three southern provinces most of the "Irish Brigade" members were returned with a League endorsement, and in addition, a number of new Tenant Leaguers were elected. In September 1852 a Conference in Dublin agreed that an Independent Irish Party should maintain an integrity within Westminster. In all a total of 48 MPs had been returned. The only Liberal gain was the seat of William Kirk in Newry, but he was not a nominee of the League.¹⁶² In county Cavan the League candidate was Hercules Ellis.¹⁶³ He opposed Sir John Young,¹⁶⁴ a Peelite, and Captain Hon James Pierce Maxwell,¹⁶⁵ a Conservative. They were both sitting members. Maxwell was an inveterate Tory but Young was a benevolent landlord and popular within the county. The previous year he had opposed the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill which drew considerable favourable comment from the local clergy and the Catholic electorate.¹⁶⁶ Another candidate had been nominated to stand in the interest of the Tenant League. He was Anthony O'Reilly. He was a local Catholic landlord who held 3,000 acres in the Crosskeys area.

¹⁶¹ This claim was made by Freeman's Journal, 2 August, 1852 and cited by Hanrahan, Irish Electioneering, p 99.

¹⁶² William Kirk, 1795-1876, born at Larne, he married Anne, daughter of James McKean of Armagh. A linen merchant and bleacher, he was magistrate for Armagh, 1840; Deputy-Lieutenant, 1862; Liberal MP for Newry, 1852-9; unsuccessful candidate for Newry and Armagh in 1865; re-elected Newry, 1868.

¹⁶³ Hercules Ellis, 1810-1879. Son of Nicholas Ellis, agent for Lennard estates at Clones. Admitted to the bar in 1831. Lived in Blackrock but was related to the Nixon family of Belturbet.

¹⁶⁴ Sir John Young, 1807-1876. Son of Sir William Young of Bailieboro. MP for Cavan, 1831-1855 when he was appointed Chief Commissioner of Ionian Islands. Chief Secretary to Lord Lieutenatn, 1852-1855.

¹⁶⁵ James Pierce Maxwell, 1813-1896. Became Ninth baron Farnham in 1884.

¹⁶⁶ Rev T P Cunningham, 'The 1852 General Election in County Cavan,' in Breifne, Vol III, No 9, (1966), p 108.

He had the support of Gavan Duffy and the Nation newspaper and the local tenant right clubs tended to endorse him over Ellis because of his associate membership of the League.¹⁶⁷ O'Reilly was eventually induced to withdraw from the contest in favour of Ellis. The result of polling was, Maxwell, 2,252 votes, Young, 2,049 votes and Ellis a mere 727.¹⁶⁸

Defeat in both Monaghan and Cavan left Ulster a province where, although tenant right was supposed to be the great attribute of the leasing process, the League was unable to attract enough support to return a single candidate. The League's quest was doomed, when two of its founder members, William Keogh was appointed Solicitor-General and John Sadleir became a Lord of the Treasury in Lord Aberdeen's administration. This was entirely against the pledges which had been entered into at the Tenant League conference. This hurt the prestige of the League and a subsequent quarrel with Archbishop Cullen in 1854-1855 further damaged the organisation's potential. In the general election of 1857 unsuitable candidates weakened its position and by 1859 it was virtually defunct. Its MPs returned to their earlier allegiances.¹⁶⁹

In Monaghan the Tenant League ceased to be a threat to the landlord interest after 1852. It would be 1865 before the county faced another contested election. Popular politics were not viable after Gray's defeat in 1852. Although the 1850 Irish Reform Act had trebled the county electorate by giving the £12 Tenement holders the vote in the counties, anti-Tory candidates could only be successful when a member of the Whig clique stood with the support of the local Catholic clergy. The only possible candidate could have come from the Rossmore family. However, this was most unlikely.¹⁷⁰ The Westenra family had been campaigning for an Earldom for some time. Henry Westenra had been in correspondence with Lord John Russell during the early 1850s in which he pointed out that the Liberal cause had been upheld by himself and his

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, pp 119-126.

¹⁶⁸ Figures taken from Walker, Parliamentary Election Results, p 259.

¹⁶⁹ See J H Whyte, The Independent Irish Party, 1850-1859, (Oxford, 1958), passim.

¹⁷⁰ PRONI, Rossmore Papers, D 2929/11/2. The discussions over the earldom continued for 10 years during which time Rossmore was unco-operative.

father since the Act of Union within the county and that there was always an understanding that a British earldom would be conferred upon the family by the Liberals in return for political favours conferred in the county of Monaghan. Henry Westenra, (now Lord Rossmore) wrote to (in addition to Russell) Lord Clarendon who said he would do his best but that it was difficult, the Third Marquis of Lansdowne then leader of the Liberals in the House of Lords, and I M Normanby, the British Ambassador in Paris and the former Whig Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.¹⁷¹ Thus, when Lord Bessborough wrote on 18 March, 1850, requesting that Henry put forward his brother Richard Westenra in the Liberal interest for the county,¹⁷² Lady Rossmore replied,

Considering all the circumstances of the case, Lord Rossmore does not think himself called upon to take any active part in disturbing the peace of this county, involving himself in the anxiety and expense of a contest.

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Westenra was thus willing to permit Conservative landlords to represent the county at Westminster rather than face the expense of a contest for a party which he felt had not kept its side of the bargain. The Dawsons, for their part, had no-one eligible to sit in the House of Commons. Richard Dawson, the third Lord Cremorne, had only one brother who was killed at the battle of Inkerman.

The conflict between the Liberal party and the Rossmore family increased as the general election of 1857 approached. On 24 March, 1857, Carlisle¹⁷⁴ wrote to Lady Rossmore to the effect that he was assured that if one of Rossmore's family, one of Lady Rossmore's family, or an independent gentleman with Rossmore support was to contest the county that he would be certain of success.¹⁷⁵ This letter, coming from the Lord Lieutenant indicated just how important the Liberal party viewed

171 D2929/11/5, D2929/11/6A, D2929/11/6B, D2929/11/7 and D2929/11/8.

172 D2929/11/11, 18 March, 1850.

173 D2929/11/12, n d.

174 George Frederick William Howard, 1802-1864. Seventh Earl Carlisle. Born in London and educated at Eaton and Oxford, he was MP for Morpeth 1826-1841. Held a number of posts in Irish administration before becoming Chief Secretary 1835-1841 and Lord Lieutenant 1855-1858. Succeeded to the title in 1848.

175 PRONI, D2929/11/13, Carlisle to Lady Rossmore, 24 March.

the support of Rossmore. The suggestion that a member of Lady Rossmore's family should contest the seat indicates the attempt by the Liberals to cover all possible avenues which might ensure Rossmore support, without which a Liberal would be unlikely to win. However, in her reply, Lady Rossmore indicated that the family would not be taking an active role.¹⁷⁷

Matters might have rested there, with the Rossmore interest finally being thrown behind a Liberal candidate but Lord Bessborough¹⁷⁸ greatly upset the family by requesting in a letter about one of the Lennard family contesting the county,

he will get some assistance from here. But as you are the natural head of the Liberal party in Monaghan, I think you will probably wish also to contribute something towards his expenses. ¹⁷⁹

Subsequent correspondence to Carlisle indicates that Lord Rossmore could not forget the long friendship which existed between the Lennard family and his own,¹⁸⁰ and he wrote as much to Charles Powell Leslie when he requested Rossmore support at the election.¹⁸¹ On 28 March Lady Rossmore wrote once again to Carlisle underlining the position of the family in county politics. She pointed out,

from the state of the constituency & from the number of votes wh we now have on the property alone the return of any Liberal Candidate without our support wd be impossible particularly as three fourths of them are high Protestants & Orange, and wd not support a Liberal candidate except from personal affection to ourselves - I have requested Mr Lennard to call here on Monday morning it wd be one thing for Ld R to give him the support of his votes & another to contribute pecuniary aid as requested by Lord Bessborough (considering the large amount of 'Pearls and diamonds,' wh we have not recd ¹⁸² from yr Excellency's party in quite another affair.

177 D2929/11/14, Lady Rossmore to Carlisle, 25 March.

178 John George Brabazon Ponsonby, 1809-1880, became fifth Earl of Bessborough in 1847; Lord Lieutenant of County Carlow, Master of Her Majesty's Stagounds, 1848-1852; and Lord steward of the household, 1868-1874.

179 D2929/11/15, Lord Bessborough to Lady Rossmore, n d.

180 Ibid, D2929/11/18 Lady Rossmore to Carlisle, 28 March.

181 D2929/11/16 Charles Powell Leslie to Lord Rossmore 25 March, and D2929/11/16 Lord Rossmore to Charles Powell Leslie, undated draft reply.

182 D2929/11/19 Lady Rossmore to Carlisle, 28 March.

This brought a conciliatory reply from Carlisle.¹⁸³

The correspondence from the prospective candidate indicated that he was very much dependent upon the support of Lord Rossmore. On 28 March he wrote that he could not take any action 'without advice of Rossmore as head of Liberals.'¹⁸⁴ In addition, St Aubyn Barret-Lennard got his brother Thomas, a close friend and political ally of Rossmore's for many years to write to him requesting that the family interest be offered to his brother.¹⁸⁵ Lennard had, after all, given Henry Westenra his support at the 1830 general election.¹⁸⁶ However, by 3 April St Aubryn Lennard is writing to Lord Rossmore asking why the support which had been promised to him was now being withheld. Lennard had gone on the basis of an initial pledge given by Lady Rossmore, but had subsequently been told by Ancketell that the Rossmore interest would now be remaining neutral during the contest. 'This being the case,' Lennard continued, 'he had absolutely no chance of success.' In reply, Lady Rossmore declared that Rossmore support was only forthcoming if there was a chance of success, which the family now believed to be unlikely.¹⁸⁷ Lennard's reply gave an indication of Rossmore's 'volte face.' After the Rossmore agent, Mr Darling, got his instructions from Lord Rossmore to instruct the tenantry upon his estates to vote for Lennard, he and the candidate had gone on a canvass of the county town where many of them lived. In the presence of Lennard he had instructed the tenants that it was Rossmore's intention to give Lennard his undivided support. In addition, the Rossmore bailiffs requested that cars be supplied to undertake the rural canvass. By the time of the rescinding of the Rossmore support, Lennard had received the pledges of almost all of Rossmore's 400 voters to plump for the Liberal.¹⁸⁸

183 D2929/11/21 Carlisle to Lady Rossmore, 29 March.

184 D2929/11/24 St Aubyn Barret-Lennard to Lady Rossmore, 3 April.

185 D2929/11/23 Sir Thomas Barret-Lennard to Lord Rossmore, 31 March.

186 See above, pp 90-1.

187 D2929/11/25A and B. Two drafts of reply from Lady Rossmore to St Aubyn Lennard, 3 April.

188 D2929/11/28 St Aubyn Lennard to Lord Rossmore, 4 April.

It would appear from the foregoing discussion, that Rossmore broke his word to Lennard after the latter had embarked upon an electoral campaign. One key to the whole affair is that at the time of the election Lord Rossmore was ill, he died three years later, and the consultations were carried out by his wife, Lady Rossmore. She took a very strong view on the way in which her husband had been treated over the earldom as her correspondence with Carlisle makes clear. She stated to the Lord Lieutenant that if it was up to her she would refuse to give any aid to the Liberals. To this end a prominent Catholic Liberal who had been associated with Lord Rossmore also wrote to Westenra asking that support be given to Lennard.¹⁸⁹ Nevertheless, the family had decided that because they had been let down by the Whigs stand for the county nor could they support a Liberal in any but a minor way. This being the case, Lennard decided to cut his losses and withdraw from the contest. When it became time for nomination day only Charles Powell Leslie and Sir George Forster were nominated, and they were thus returned to Westminster unopposed.

Two years later, in 1859, another general election was called. Once again there was no opposition to the Tories from Rossmore, and the Cremorne interest was still not in a position to field a candidate. Election expenses were becoming so prohibitive that the major families were unwilling to get involved in a contest unless one of their own members was involved. Thus, the two major landlords were uninterested in the representation of the county. This is opposed to the often held belief that the Conservative monopolisation of the representation of county Monaghan was in the face of a concerted effort of the small band of Liberal landlords in the county who were eventually successful in 1865.¹⁹⁰ Rather, the Liberals remained neutral, at a period in any case when the Tories were attracting Catholic support in surprising amounts.¹⁹¹

189 Sir John Lentaigne, 1805-1886. Educated at TCD, MB 1828, FRCSI Commissioner of Loan Funds, Inspector General of Prisons 1854-1877. JP for counties and Monaghan, High Sheriff for Monaghan 1844 and later a Deputy-Lieutenant. Contested Dublin County as a Liberal in 1852. Commissioner of Education 1861-1886, Commander of Bath 1873, Knight Commander of Bath, 1880. President of Statistical Society of Ireland, 1877-1878.

190 This standard assertion is carried in Rushe, pp 282-285, and thence to Livingston, p 236.

191 On the 1859 campaign in Ireland, see, K Theodore Hoppen, 'Tories, Catholics, and the General Election of 1859,' in The Historical Journal Vol XIII, No 1 (1970), pp 48-67.

The Conservative administration of Lord Derby lasted only sixteen months. In the general election of 1859 the Whigs were returned. However, in Ireland where the Liberal support of the Italian reformers and Palmerston's almost complete avoidance of any Irish issue had weakened support for that party, the Tories expected to do rather well. They made somewhat vague suggestions about tenant right legislation and a charter for the Catholic university. In Dublin the then Archbishop Cullen remained neutral where he had supported the Liberals in 1857.¹⁹² As a result of the more favourable reaction of the Tories to Catholic issues the party was able to return a majority of the Irish seats for the only time in its history.

From the close of the general election of 1859 until 1873 Ireland was ruled with the aid of the Peace Preservation Act, and in addition, from 1866 until 1869 the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended.¹⁹³ It was a period of continuing emigration, and rural unrest. South Ulster was one area where sectarianism was often a motivating factor in the lives of both Protestant and Catholic peasantry. However, the Ribbon system was more evident in Munster than Ulster in the pre-famine period. Table 2.4 below indicates the variation in agrarian outrages.

	<u>AGRARIAN OUTRAGES</u> ¹⁹⁴			
	1844	1845	1850	1851
Tipperary	253	311	208	134
Limerick	74	128	59	38
Monaghan	20	22	48	48
Down	6	9	84	44
Armagh	5	18	79	96

The massive increase in evictions in Ulster during the famine period due to the landlords' attempts to limit the Ulster Custom and to eliminate

¹⁹² Ibid, p 63.

¹⁹³ E R Norman, The Catholic Church and Ireland in the Age of Rebellion, (Ithaca, 1965), p 4.

¹⁹⁴ Table taken from Joe Lee, 'The Ribbonmen,' in Williams ed, Secret Societies in Ireland, p 30.

overpopulation was reacted to by the rural secret societies in Ulster during the campaign. The increase in county Monaghan while not overly large in actual numbers, was more than double in 1850 the total agrarian outrages in 1845. In that year, for example, a local Catholic landlord, Charles Kenny of Mount Savage, Inniskeen was shot at, and subsequently lowered rent. A neighbour, Mr Mauleverer was murdered near Lough Fea, whilst William S Trench, the infamous land agent, was the subject of a Ribbon plot to 'put him out of the way.'¹⁹⁵ The following year, Thomas D Bateson, the agent for the Templetown estate near Castleblayney and a cousin of Sir Thomas Bateson (later Baron Deramore) was battered to death.¹⁹⁶ Three years later, an excursion train from Enniskillen to Derry filled with Orangemen was derailed at Trillick injuring the Grand Master, Lord Enniskillen.¹⁹⁷ In 1855 the neighbouring county of Cavan witnessed a particularly brutal murder of a local landlord, Miss Charlotte Hinds. Cavan was an area where the Molly Maguires were particularly active, being formed in the parish of Cloone in nearby county Leitrim.¹⁹⁸ The murder of both a resident magistrate and a stipendary magistrate in 1845 had led to protest meetings by county 'society.'¹⁹⁹ The tenor of such rural assassinations kept tensions high. There is also evidence that it helped to keep rents low.²⁰⁰

Ribbonism and rural radicalism were firm bases upon which to ground another, more far reaching movement. On St Patrick's Day 1858 Archbishop Cullen issued a circular opposing secret societies; elsewhere in Dublin James Stephens was forming the Irish Republican Brotherhood. This association was able to absorb the earlier Ribbonmen even though it was, in theory in any case, an anti-sectarian organisation. The process in Cavan was carried out principally by men recruited by O'Donovan Rossa.²⁰¹

195 Trench, Realities of Irish Life, p 183.

196 McClelland, Orangeism in Monaghan, p 393, n 12.

197 Very Rev Bernard O'Daly, PP, 'Material for a History of the Parish of Kilskeery,' in Clogher Record, Vol I, No 3, (1955), pp 102-103.

198 David Fitzpatrick, TCD, O'Donnell Lecture.

199 Rev D Gallogly, 'Land Trouble in Templeport in 1855,' in Breifne, Vol V, No 19 (1979), p 383.

200 Lee, 'The Ribbonmen,' p 33.

201 Sean O Luing, 'A Contribution to a Study of Fenianism in Breifne,' in Breifne, Voll III, No 10, pp 155-174.

Similarly, in county Monaghan the ribbon areas such as Tyholland became Fenian centres.²⁰² Often the leaders of the two organisations were identical, as was the case with James Blayney Rice, a prominent Ribbonman and subsequently the head of the Fenian Brotherhood in the area.²⁰³ And even he was unsuccessful in attracting some of the more militant Ribbonmen who suspected any movement which admitted Protestants to its brotherhood.²⁰⁴ Consequently, it was not surprising that the barony of Farney was proclaimed in July, 1848 and remained so until June, 1865.²⁰⁵ Four weeks later it was again proclaimed, this time as a result of the Monaghan election; whereas in February 1866, the whole county was similarly proscribed.

It was against this background that Monaghan faced the 1865 general election. As already noted, the local Tory magnates had been invincible for some time. However, as 1865 approached it became clear that their hegemony would be challenged by a Liberal candidate. The lesson of 1852 was that there was no possibility of a Liberal candidate not of the landlord class being elected. If there was any possibility of success the candidate would have to be a member of one of the leading families. As ever, the problem would be to entice one of the members of the Whigs families to stand by assuring him that there was sufficient support for a Liberal candidate. As the lesson of the 1857 election was that unless the Liberal magnates were willing to support you then there was no possibility of success. If there was no possibility of success then there was little likelihood of persuading one of the nobility to contest the seat.

The key factor in the equation was the growing disenchantment of the Marquis of Bath with Sir George Forster. He had supported Forster in 1852 for the nomination, and this had helped to ensure that Gray did not get elected, as the Catholic votes of eastern Farney thus went not

202 Rossa often utilised Ribbonism to extend the influence of Fenianism. See, Diarmuid O'Donovan Rossa, Rossa's Recollections, 1838-98, introduced by Sean O Luing (Shannon, 1972), Ch II.

203 On Rice's career, see Charles T Rice, 'Fenianism in Monaghan,' Clogher Record, Vol 1, No 4 (1956), pp 29-84; and Breandan Mac Giolla Choille, 'Fenians, Rice and Ribbonmen in County Monaghan, 1864-67', Clogher Record, Vol 6, No 2, (1967), pp 221-252.

204 O Luing, 'Fenianism in Breifne,' p 157.

205 Return Specifying Date or Dates Barony of Farney was Proclaimed under the Act to Prevent Crime and Outrage in Monaghan, HC 1866 (208) LVIII 421.

to the Tenant League candidate, but to the Conservative.²⁰⁶ While Forster had the support of the Marquis of Bath he was in a fairly strong position. However, in 1865 he quarrelled with Forster and decided to support Hon Vesey Dawson.²⁰⁷ The support of Bath together with the influence which the family enjoyed and, presumably, aid from Lennard and Rossmore against the Tories, was enough to persuade the aged Earl of Dartrey's son to contest the seat.

Against Dawson came the two sitting members; Charles Powell Leslie and Sir George Forster.²⁰⁸ Dawson could count upon the support of the Liberals of the county, including those who had supported Gray in 1852. In addition, he had the services of the Carrickmacross mob which was always attentive to the wishes of the Bath family. On the other hand, the Conservative candidates had the backing of the county Monaghan Orangemen. The organisation had always been a Conservative organisation. For example, in 1848 at a special meeting of the County Grand Lodge a new lodge had been instituted with Charles Powell Leslie its Worshipful Master. The members included, Sir George Forster, Henry Mitchell, Thomas Bateson, Fitzherbert Dacre Lucas, Richard Mayne, Andre Allan Murray, Richard Lucas, Rev J R Young, and Charles Powell Leslie.²⁰⁹ These new Orangemen, among others, made up the membership of Victoria Monaghan Orange Lodge No 104. Consequently, it was not surprising that at the 1852 election a resolution was passed directing all Orangemen to vote for Brothers Leslie and Forster, and when Sam Gray's son, Edward Warren Gray, did not comply that he was strongly censored at the following meeting.²¹⁰ However, support was not unconditional and in 1861 it was decided that each county lodge should visit the Conservative MPs and

206 Hanrahan, Irish Electioneering, p 58.

207 Ibid, p 99.

208 Sir George Forster, 1796-1876. Son of Rev Sir Thomas Forster and Dorcas, daughter of Rev George Howse DD of Cork. Married Anna Maria eldest daughter of Mathew Fortescue of county Louth in 1817, and in 1830 Charlotte Hume of Humewood. Magistrate, counties Meath, Louth and Monaghan, Deputy Lieutenant for Louth and Monaghan. MP, Monaghan, 1852-1865.

209 County Monaghan Grand Orange Lodge Minutes, 14 July, 1848, pp 13-14.

210 Ibid, 20 April, 1852, p 41, and 19 April, 1853, p 44.

request them to give proper support to Orange issues.²¹¹

In 1863 the Monaghan Orangemen decided to support no candidate who would not give a distinct pledge to further the Protestant principles of the Institution.²¹² Thus when the general election of 1865 was announced the Orangemen held a special meeting of their County Grand Lodge. Upon this meeting depended whether the local Orange organisation would support the two Conservative candidates. At the meeting it was proposed by William Wolseley Madden²¹³ and seconded by Rev John Flanagan²¹⁴ and unanimously resolved,

. . . that this Grand Lodge is of opinion (sic) that every effort should be made by the Orangemen of this county to secure the return of Col Leslie and Sir Geo Forster, and that it is the bounden duty of our Brethren throughout the county to do all in their power to attain this object.

215

Although the loss of the Bath interest would obviously be to the detriment of Forster, the support of the Orangemen would be of considerable benefit. For example, on the Rossmore estate there were a large number of Orangemen who would otherwise have supported the candidate of their landlord's choice, presumably Dawson. The Liberal candidate's brother, Thomas Dawson the Grand Treasurer tendered his

211 Ibid, 28 January, 1861, p 84.

212 Ibid, 30 October, 1863, p 98.

213 William Wolseley Madden, 1840-1874. Youngest son of Col John Madden of Hilton Park, Clones. A former Captain in the Eighth Kings Regiment, and also county Monaghan Militia. A prominent Orangeman, he was incarcerated in 1872, appointed Special Commissioner of Emigration to the government of Canada in 1873. He died the following year. For a summary of his Orange career, see above, Ch IV, p 207 n 79.

214 Rev John Flanagan, born in Fermanagh, he was educated at Portora Royal School, Enniskillen, before entering Trinity College in 1834. He graduated in 1839 and became curate of Newtownhamilton in 1842. He was rector of St Laebhan's Parish Church, Killeevan, 1853-1876. He was responsible for the erection of a new church in Lisnaskea in 1852, and he built St Laebhan's in 1857. A prominent Orangemen and polemicist, he rose to prominence during the disestablishment crisis. He died in 1882.

215 Minutes of the County Grand Orange Lodge of Monaghan, 4 July, 1865, pp 107-108.

resignation from the Grand Lodge because he felt obliged to vote for the Liberal, but when the lodge heard that he was entirely in sympathy with the Conservative members they refused to accept his resignation.²¹⁶

On the other side from the Orangemen, the Liberal candidate was supported by the local Catholic clergy. At the Select Committee on elections in 1868 it was stated by a Mr John Norwood, who acted as Sheriff's assessor for the Monaghan election of 1865 in reply to a question on the extent of clerical effort,

I saw, while I was acting in my official capacity, a number of Roman Catholic clergy men engaged in the election; I saw them in the booths; I saw them apparently bringing up voters, and appearing extremely active . . . They appeared to be acting as agents for the Liberal candidate.

217

The 1865 election was a particularly bellicose affair. The Conservative candidates had the support of the Orange Lodge which acted as an armed mob on behalf of Leslie and Forster. On the other side there was a very large Catholic mob determined to ensure that Dawson was returned. The Catholic mob had come from as far away as county Louth where the Conservative candidates had withdrawn due to fear of intimidation.²¹⁸ Consequently, the Liberal mob in that county was able to cross the boundary and give aid to its co-religionists in Monaghan. This was not unusual in the mid-nineteenth century for supporters to give aid in more than one county. For example, in Monaghan in 1868 it is most likely that Orangemen from other than simply Monaghan were involved in that campaign.²¹⁹

Polling day was 24 July and on the morning of the election a large crowd of Orangemen arrived from Clones for the purpose of ensuring that Conservative voters from that part of the country were not intimidated

²¹⁶ Ibid,

²¹⁷ Report of the Select Committee on Parliamentary and Municipal elections; with the proceedings, minutes of evidence, appendix and index; 1868-69 (352) VIII-I, p 334.

²¹⁸ The eventual result in Louth was Chichester Samuel Fortescue (L) 628, Tristram Kennedy (L) 607, Frederick John Foster (C) 8, John McClintock (C) 6.

²¹⁹ For a discussion of the Orange role at the 1868 election see my 'Border Ballads and Sectarian Affrays,' in Clogher Record, Forthcoming, (August, 1982).

and also, no doubt, to do unto others as they would do unto them. In the town they were met by the Dawson mob. There was a collision between the opposing forces and a number of men were wounded. Norwood described the scene.

. . . and when I arrived in the town I found a large force of military, both infantry and cavalry, and they had drawn a cordon of troops, under the command of resident magistrates, across the town, so as to separate the two mobs. On one side was this mob, which they called the Cremorne mob, and which, I understood, came from a distance; the majority of persons composing this mob were not belonging to the county of Monaghan. On the other side there were a number of Protestants, who had come in from the neighbourhood of Clones, and I was informed that they came in a body for mutual protection . . . I was informed that there was a Roman Catholic clergyman of great influence there, and I was introduced to that gentleman and I said that as a clergyman, he was bound to assist in preserving the peace and preventing collision between those two parties . . . After some further conversation I spoke to Mr Vesey Dawson and explained to him the danger if those parties remained in the town. Mr Dawson asked me to go to his committee-room . . . I never saw such a mob in my life; they were armed with blunderbusses (sic) duck guns, rifles, scythes on poles, sticks, and other weapons, and they roared and shouted.

220

Dawson then addressed the crowd from the window of the committee rooms. The Roman Catholic clergy, Norwood continued, some of whom were from other counties, exerted themselves in moving the Catholic mob out of the town and the peace was preserved.²²¹

There were three polling places in the county for that election, Monaghan town, Castleblayney and at Carrickmacross. In Carrickmacross where the population was almost entirely Catholic there was also trouble.²²² However, in Castleblayney where the Ballybay, Castleblayney, Muckno and south Monaghan voters cast their votes there was further trouble. As with Monaghan town the voters would be fairly evenly divided between Protestants and Roman Catholics. The scene was set for a major confrontation by the fact that a local RM reported to Dublin Castle that the Dundalk mob had cut the telegraph lines between Castleblayney and

220 Select Committee on Elections, HC 1868-1869 (332) VIII-I pp 312-3.

221 Ibid, p 316.

222 PRONI, Mic 347/2, 'State Paper Office Files on 1865 Election.'

and Dundalk so as to make the position of the police more difficult.²²³

The Orangemen who had been in Monaghan town to ensure the safety of the Monaghan and Clones electors then made their way by train to Castleblayney. It is unclear whether the entire contingent went home via Castleblayney or only those of them who resided in the eastern part of the county. The Catholics for their part were well organised. The local clergy, fearing a riot, had instructed their flocks, both electors and non-electors, to turn out in force on election day.²²⁴ When the train carrying the Orangemen arrived in Castleblayney station it was met by a Dawson mob. The Orangemen, fearing that their position was untenable fired upon their opponents. As a result, one of the opposing party was shot.²²⁵

The police arrested seven men and accused them of riot. In addition, five others were arrested for firing with intent to wound at the station and one with assaulting the station master. On 25 July an inquest was held into the cause of death of the Catholic member of the Dawsonite mob, a man named Shelvin, and three Orangemen were returned for trial on a charge of murder.²²⁶ All three were eventually freed. One of them, Edward Warren Gray, was a son of Sam Gray and had been involved in the Tenant League in the Ballybay area some thirteen years earlier. Gray's case must have dragged on for some considerable time because the Monaghan Orangemen passed the following resolution at their meeting in November 1868,

That this Grand Lodge express its deep sympathy with Br Edwd Warren Gray for his losses in consequences with expenses incurred by his trial at Monaghan Assizes, and that it considers that 2 members of this Grand Lodge should after the next Election wait upon Colol Leslie and Sir George Forster to ask them to reimburse Br Gray the expenses which he incurred on their behalf as we consider that Br Gray should not be obliged to pay the expenses out of his own pocket.

227

The result of the election was a victory for Leslie and Dawson. Leslie's position was always very strong. The candidate most likely

223 Ibid, J D Green, Castleblayney to Dublin Castle, 20 July.

224 Ibid, J D Green, Castleblayney to Dublin Castle, 17 July.

225 Livingston, Monaghan Story, p 236.

226 PRONI, Mic 347/2, John N Leeson to Dublin Castle, 28 July.

227 County Minutes, 10 November, 1868, p 135.

to fail was Forster who lost the erstwhile support of the Carrickmacross district. The polling at the Carrickmacross booth gave Dawson 709 votes, Forster 171 votes and Leslie 161 votes.²²⁸ We may assume that no Catholic voted for Leslie, he being complete anathema to that segment of the population. Therefore the Protestant vote must have been 161. Thus only 10 Catholics used their second vote for Forster. Dawson's 709 voters, almost certainly all Catholics, plumped for the Liberal. Therefore even some of Forster's tenants must have been unable to vote for him. The loss of Carrickmacross where he had been strong in the past was a telling blow to his campaign. The final result was,²²⁹

Charles Powell Leslie	C	2,551
Hon Vesey Dawson	L	2,397
Sir George Forster, bt	C	2,218
Edward James Stanley	L	3

Stanley retired before the election, never being a serious candidate from the start.

After complete Conservative hegemony for 13 years the Liberals had won a memorable victory. Once again it was achieved without the aid of the Liberal Presbyterians.²³⁰ A Liberal member of the aristocracy with the active support of the Catholic clergy and the backing of the Catholic population had unseated one of the Tories. It was a new beginning in Monaghan politics. Irrespective of how the Liberal landlords felt, they recognised after 1865 that they must have the support of the Catholic population. As subsequent discussion will indicate, this meant that the Catholic Bishop of Clogher was now becoming part of the selection process, and through him the largest section of the county's Liberal voters was also included in the selection process. The Conservatives, for their part, could not simply count upon passive support from their Protestant tenantry. This was made clear by the County Grand Lodge. Thus the ordinary people would decide whether a particular person would get the nomination for one of the major parties. And whereas the position

228 Mic 347/2, RM to Dublin Castle, 22 July.

229 Walker, Parliamentary Election Results, p 305.

230 This assertion is made by Phil Callan MP for Louth in a letter to Bishop Donnelly regarding the 1868 election. See below, p 240.

of the Monaghan county democracy was still subservient to the major landed powers, it could never again be completely ignored. The question now was whether popular Liberal or Conservative politics could break down the sectarian divide which was becoming more and more evident in the county in particular, and the island in general.

CHAPTER III

'The Queen's Crown in the Boyne'

1868 Election

The 1865 general election returned a Whig government to power with Earl Russell at its head. The Liberal members totalled 370 to the Conservatives' 288.¹ Of the Irish representation, the Conservatives held 47 seats and the Liberals 58. This was a nett Conservative loss of eight seats. The representation of Ireland, then, was tipping decisively in favour of the Liberal party. This was the commencement of the gradual 'Liberalisation' of Ireland. As might be expected, the core of Tory support was concentrated in the north of the island, in the province of Ulster. In 1865 the total Conservative MPs was 47. Of these, 27 represented constituencies in Ulster. The breakdown between borough and county representation was 16 and 11. In other words, the borough representation of Ulster was entirely in Conservative hands after the 1865 election. Only two Liberals sat for the province, Cremorne in Monaghan, and Captain Edward James Saunderson for the neighbouring county of Cavan.

Apart from Ulster, the Tories were still strong in pockets in the rest of the island. Of the 20 non-Ulster Tories, five were returned for the nation's capital. Dublin University returned two Conservatives, Whiteside and Lefroy, almost as a matter of course. The city of Dublin sent one Conservative and one Liberal to Westminster, this being the loss of John Vance who had represented the constituency since 1852. In

¹ Electoral statistics have been taken from F W S Craig, British Parliamentary Election Results, (London 1974), Table 2, p 6222, and Walker, Parliamentary Election Results, pp 101-105.

addition, county Dublin had been a safe Conservative seat since the general election of 1835. Of the remaining 15 Tory seats in Ireland, there were enough Protestants upon the restricted electoral register in counties Leitrim and Sligo to return one local landlord in the former and two in the latter, and as such, may be viewed as an adjunct to the political activities of the electors of Ulster. A similar position was occupied by counties Wexford and Wicklow which each sent one Conservative representative to Westminster, as a result of a Protestant overflow from Dublin. The town of Bandon in the western portion of county Cork was a small Protestant enclave, being known during the nineteenth century as 'the Derry of the south.' Bandon had always been in Conservative hands, although it was subsequently lost in 1868 to William Shaw.

The remaining nine Tory MPs reflected local anomalies. The county of Carlow, for example, returned two Conservatives. It was a stronghold of Catholic Conservatism resulting directly from the popularity of local landlords like the Bruen and Kavanagh families. Conservative success in the remaining seven constituencies indicates that support for popular landlords must also have been a factor there. The return of a Conservative in both Kings and Cork counties was most unusual² as was the result in county Clare. None of these seats nor the other constituencies (counties Mayo, Queens and Waterford, and the borough of New Ross) were places where the Conservatives enjoyed any long lasting success.

In other words, the results of the 1865 general election demonstrated that the Conservative party was only really viable in two areas, Ulster and the south-eastern areas around Dublin. In addition, the county of Carlow was reasonably secure due to local political hegemony on the part of the landlords. With the exception of temporary aberrations elsewhere,

² Apart from Ulster and the Dublin area where Conservatism was strong, and Carlow where popular landlords exerted an influence, there were no county constituencies where there was a Tory presence of any importance. Vandeleur sat for Clare 1865-1874, Leader for Cork 1861-1868, Hennessey for Kings 1859-1865 and King 1865-1868 and Mayo had a Tory MP 1850-1852, 1857-1874, Walker, Parliamentary Election Results, passim.

the 1865 results indicate that the Conservative party was the party of the Protestants of Ireland. The Catholics generally voted for the Liberals. And within Ulster this divergence was even more marked. Thus, if any further proof was needed, the sectarian aspect of Irish politics was well established prior to the period 1866-1886 when the great political issues would be inextricably tied up with religious adherence.

The period from 1865 to the general election of 1868 was dominated by the Fenian movement. It had been founded in Dublin on St Patrick's Day 1858 by James Stephens. Stephens commenced a campaign to rebuild revolutionary nationalism in Ireland, which had been virtually extinct since the debacle of 1848. He commenced his famous 'three thousand mile walk' and was fortunate to encounter Jeremiah Donovan (subsequently O'Donovan and eventually O'Donovan Rossa) who had founded the Phoenix Society in Skibbereen, county Cork. Rossa claimed that when O'Mahoney and Stephens heard of his society they realised that 'the seed of national life was in the old land still. They agreed to start into action.'³ However, this was clearly not the case. Fenianism had been a potential movement since the old days in Paris where all the refugees of the European year of revolutions mixed together and discussed great future actions. Ireland was one of the few countries where the convivialities of Paris were put into action.⁴

Fenianism quickly spread throughout the three southern provinces and made small inroads into the Catholic communities in the province of Ulster. The arrest of the Rossa group in Cork proved but a temporary setback and by the early 1860s the movement had widespread support in both Ireland and Great Britain, North America, and British army regiments at home and abroad. In Britain its role was seen initially as one of a support organisation, but the Fenians were quickly active.⁵ As the association was perfected, a Fenian newspaper, the Irish People was founded in 1863, and this gave the editors an opportunity to disseminate their views throughout Ireland. The journal's premises also

³ Diarmuid O'Donovan Rossa, Rossa's Recollections, 1838-1898, introduced by Sean O'Luing, (Shannon, 1972), p 199.

⁴ Kevin Nowlan, 'The Fenians at Home,' in Williams, Secret Societies, p 93.

⁵ See, for example, John Denvir, Life Story of an Old Rebel, (Shannon, 1972).

doubled as a headquarters for the movement. Government unease at the revolutionary intent of the Fenians, fuelled by information received from a large number of informers, led the authorities to raid the offices of the Irish People, arrest the editors, John O'Leary, Thomas Clarke Luby and O'Donovan Rossa and break up the leadership. Stephens was arrested within a few weeks but he escaped just as rapidly. Travelling throughout the country over the subsequent months, Stephens was able to augment the Fenian forces. The movement kept in the headlines with spectacular acts in England. In 1866 there was the attack upon Chester Castle. The following year saw the Manchester rescue and the Clerkenwell explosion which killed upwards of 12 people and injured 120.⁶ In between these two events and the attack on Chester Castle, Ireland saw the Fenian insurrection in March 1867. A rising had been planned for 1865 and had then been postponed until 1866, and when it eventually took place, it hardly achieved more than had the men of '48. It was, as A M Sullivan noted,

. . . one of those insensate proceedings into which men involved in a ruined cause sometimes plunge, rather than bow to the disgrace and dishonour of defeat without a blow. 7

Where the Fenians' activities were of the utmost importance was that the trials which came in their aftermath invoked a large degree of sympathy. Their dignified conduct in the face of certain incarceration when faced in open court with informers and eye witnesses, gained a respect for their movement which it could never elicit in the open field. Similarly, the execution of Allen, Larkin and O'Brien for accidentally murdering Sergeant Brett, led to much sympathy among the Irish populations at home and abroad. It also had an added importance in that the defence of the Fenian prisoners by a prominent member of the Irish bar was considerably to enhance his personal reputation and fit him for the task which lay ahead in the formation of the Home Government Association.

The Fenian movement was never of much consequence in the county of Monaghan. Here, as with so much of the rest of the island, the movement

6 There are a large number of works relating to the Fenians. See, for example, Leon O'Broin, Fenian Fever: An Anglo-American Dilemma, (London, 1971).

7 A M Sullivan, New Ireland, p 273.

grew from ribbon beginnings. It had been organised by James Blayney Rice⁸ of Tyholland in north Monaghan. He had been sworn into the movement in 1863 by a Belfast Fenian called Frank Roney.⁹ The following year, Rossa visited Rice when he toured south Ulster.¹⁰ Rice set about organising the Fenian Brotherhood in the locality. His position as a head of the ribbon system in north Monaghan gave him an opportunity to set up cells. It is related that there was a certain amount of reticence on the part of some of the Ribbonmen who suspected any organisation which took the extreme step of permitting membership to Protestants.¹¹ At this time one of the members of the Supreme Council of the I R B was David Bell, erstwhile Presbyterian minister at Derryvalley Church, Ballybay, and one of the leading Presbyterian supporters of the Tenant League in the county a decade earlier.¹²

In 1865, the year in which Stephens had promised that there would be an uprising, two American Fenians arrived in the county to discuss details of the local movement. Subsequently, in January 1866, Rice was arrested while trying to purchase rifles in Armagh city. He was released three weeks later but rearrested in March when the Habeus Corpus Act was suspended. In November 1866 he went to America but returned two and a half years later.¹³ The I R B never reached large proportions within the county, and there was no military activity to speak of.

The neighbouring county of Cavan was another area where the Fenians were organised out of the Ribbon system. The movement in that county was supposedly one of the strongest in Ireland. It was virtually the

8 James Blayney Rice, 1830-1908. Son of John Blayney Rice, a substantial farmer from Leitrim in Tyholland between Monaghan and Glaslough and a prominent Ribbon man. Rice was early in Ribbon activities and became leader of the Monaghan Fenians. Arrested under the Suspension Act of 1866, he went to America but returned two and a half years later. The following year he married Katherine Geraghty of Tyholland. He was active in the Land League in later life.

9 Charles T Rice, 'Fenianism in Monaghan,' in Clogher Record, Vol I, No 4 (1956), p 31.

10 Rossa, Recollections, p 73.

11 Livingston, Monaghan Story, p 237.

12 See, Thomas Bell, 'The Reverend David Bell,' in Clogher Record, Vol VI, No 2, pp 253-276.

13 Breándan Mac Giolla Choille, 'Fenians, Rice and Ribbonmen,' in ibid, passim.

Ribbonmen in different guise. There may have been as many as 3,500 Fenians in that county, particularly concentrated in the west of the county where Ribbonism had always been particularly strong.¹⁴ However, the fact that there was no uprising in 1867 might suggest that Fenianism was not as well organised as the leadership imagined. It indicates that notwithstanding the hysteria which local Protestants felt in south Ulster over the Fenian conspiracy, that there was little possibility of any but minor agrarian outrages of the sort which the Ribbonmen had been perpetrating for the preceding 20 years. Even Cavan (and county Leitrim still further to the west) could not manage a decent show to compare with the 'rip-roaring' skirmishes the Ribbonmen regularly held with their Orange partners.

Nevertheless, the local Protestants in south Ulster were worried. The correspondence from the local magistrates to Thomas Larcom at Dublin Castle indicated that they were living in fear of their lives.¹⁵ And even if this was clearly not the case, it was not recognised by the local landlords and Protestants generally. Riots on 12 July 1865, and again, as noted above,¹⁶ at the time of the Monaghan election all tended to confirm them in the belief that a great conspiracy existed to repeat the risings of 1641. Thus, the Monaghan Orangemen held a special meeting of the County Grand Lodge where it was decided that,

The District Masters of this county do forthwith call special meetings of their Districts and take necessary steps to prevent their districts being taken by surprise by any Fenian rising, and to see that each member was prepared to meet any emergency that might arise. 17

14 Sean O Luing, A Contribution to a Study of Fenianism in Breifne, in Breifne, Vol III, No 10, (1967), p 174.

15 See correspondence to Dublin Castle quoted in Rice, 'Fenianism in Monaghan,' pp52-56. In October 1866 John Madden had an iron door fitted at Hilton; see John Madden's Diary, 10 October, 1866.

16 See above, ChII pp118-20.

17 County Grand Minutes, 12 January, 1866, p 114.

This meeting, held on 12 January, 1866 also ordered that each district should report back to the County Lodge as to the preparations which had been taken in the various localities. In any case, there was no Fenian rising and there was no reason for the Orangemen to muster until the next election in 1868.

THE CHURCH OF IRELAND AND ITS DISESTABLISHMENT

This study commenced with a survey of the parliamentary representation of Monaghan from the Act of Union to the general election of 1865. The next election, that of 1868, was fought almost exclusively upon the proposal to annul one of the sections of that Act. The position of the Church of Ireland had always been an irritant to both Catholic prelate and layman, and the decision by William Ewart Gladstone to effect its disestablishment was the key issue in Irish politics during the years 1867-1868. The eventual successful completion of the plan to disestablish and disendow the church was to play an important part in the formative period of the Home Government Association from 1870-1873.

When the Act of Union was passed in 1800, uniting the two houses of parliament in Dublin and London, certain safeguards were added to aid its passage. The actual Act contained eight articles. The first half of the measure dealt with the political settlement. That is to say, it defined the amount and form of representation which the lesser kingdom was henceforward to have within the new united Imperial Parliament. The Fifth Article dealt with the religious question. It ordered that the Church of Ireland and the Church of England, ". . . as now by law established, be united into one Protestant Episcopal Church, to be called 'The United Church of England and Ireland; and that the doctrine, worship, discipline and government of the said United Church shall be and shall remain in full force forever . . .'"¹⁸ This point had been crucial in the effort to gain the acceptance of the Ascendancy class to the union of the parliaments. As the events of 1798, and the actions of such earlier groups such as the Whiteboys indicated, a Protestant

minority could be endangered by the behaviour of certain sections of the majority.¹⁹ This was especially true in the south and west of the island where the Protestants were in a distinct minority situation, and where the vast majority of those Protestants were adherents to the Church of Ireland. By merging the two churches in 1800, this beleaguered garrison became, overnight, part of the overwhelming majority of the population of these islands, and the psychological effect which this had upon the Protestants of Ireland was enormous. The very fact that there was, at present, a move to annul Grattan's parliament indicated that Irish Protestants could be as subject to the caprice of the English as were their Catholic neighbours. The Protestant position in Ireland required extra support, and this would be achieved by uniting the two churches. At a stroke, the Protestant minority in Ireland had achieved majority status.

Although this might have been enough to reassure the Protestant Ascendancy, the Act of Union went still further. Clause Five continued, "and that the continuance and the preservation of the said United Church, as the Established Church of England and Ireland, shall be deemed and taken to be an essential and fundamental part of the Union."²⁰ This, then, precluded a later government from undermining the position of the Church of Ireland without revoking the entire Act of Union. The whole being of the Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland was definitionally dependent upon the established Church of Ireland; without it no such grouping could exist, the church was the cornerstone of their society. This unequivocal support lent to the Church of Ireland by Clause Five of the Act seemed to put the matter beyond dispute. It safeguarded the Protestant Ascendancy forevermore.

19 Both the Whiteboys and the United Irishmen in places such as Wexford caused widespread fear amongst the isolated pockets of Protestants outside Ulster. Maureen Wall suggests in 'Whiteboys,' in T D Williams, ed, Secret Societies in Ireland, p 25, that Whiteboy atrocities were utilised by the Protestant ruling classes to divide Catholic and Protestant and retain their position.

20 Akenson, Church of Ireland, 1800-1885, p 71.

However, the union of the churches was one in name only. It was a measure enacted by the two parliaments. At no time did a synod or conference of prelates of either church meet to discuss the impending union, or indeed, to offer advice to the government. There was no great discussion after the measure on the part of the Church of Ireland as to whether or not it was beneficial. In form and administrative organisation the Church of Ireland had been almost identical to the Church of England, in any case. It retained, after the first of January, 1801, the same ecclesiastical set-up as before. And the degree of unanimity which the union of the churches evoked is indicative of the lack of change which took place. Only Bishop Thomas O'Beirne of Meath made a proposal. He suggested that the churches be institutionally united with the Archbishop of Canterbury becoming the new head of the church.²¹ This plan, however, was not received with favour. The Church of Ireland, then, was rather well catered for by the Union. It was no longer the church of the minority of Irish people; it had virtually no price to pay for this achievement, no-one lost their jobs, no bishoprics were united or any reforming measures enacted. The churches were united in name only. The benefits afforded by the Act of Union cost nothing and they were irrevocable - after all, no British government would revoke the Act of Union.

The position of the established Church, however, was one which was under almost constant attack from the Catholics and indeed, Presbyterians, of Ireland. One other effect of the measure uniting the two churches which was not recognised by the Irish prelates at the time of the Union was that their church was now, as part and parcel of the Church of England, open to attack from British radical MPs.²² The establishment of the church was to prove a major stumbling block to the efforts of England to maintain a peaceful and contented Ireland within the United Kingdom. Thus, the tithes which both Presbyterians and Roman Catholics were expected to pay to the established church proved

²¹ J T Ball, The Reformed Church of Ireland (1537-1886) (London, 1886), p 221.

²² Akenson, Church of Ireland, 1800-1886, p 73.

to be a constant irritant. Some notice had already been taken of the opposition to the tithes which led, not only to the tithe war which resulted in the transference of the obligation from the tenant to the landlord,²³ but also to the constant agrarian unrest which was directed by the everpresent secret societies.²⁴ Throughout the century there was a number of reformist measures which lessened the burden upon the Catholics and the Presbyterian dissenters.²⁵ However, this did not defuse the situation. The position of the Catholic Church in the controversy ensured that disestablishment would continue to be an issue. And unlike Presbyterians who might oppose establishment in principle, the Catholics were fighting about the emoluments which that Church had held prior to the Reformation.

The incontrovertible argument put forward by those who would disendow the Church of Ireland was that it was the church of a minority of the Irish people, and furthermore, that it was the church of the very wealthiest section of Irish society. The first indication of the religious adherence of the Irish people was given in the Report of Commissioners of Public Instruction, Ireland, which recorded a population in the island of 7,954,100 of which only 853,160 were Church of Ireland, 643,058 were Presbyterians, 21,882 other Protestant dissenters and 6,436,060 Roman Catholics.²⁶ This translates into percentages of Church of Ireland 10.72%, Presbyterians 8.09%, other Protestants 0.28%, and Roman Catholics 80.91%. In other words, the Church of Ireland was supported by tithes which were levied upon a population, 89.28% of which belonged to other faiths - the very vast majority Roman Catholics. In

23 This was the result of the Tithe Rent-Charge Act of 1838.

24 On this agrarian unrest see above, Ch II, pp 114-5.

25 In 1832 an act was passed making composition for tithes permanent. In 1833 the Church Temporalities Act was passed which took the obligation for the upkeep of church buildings away from non-Anglicans, the Tithe Composition Acts of 1832 and 1838, and the Ministers' Money Act which ended the funding of Church of Ireland clerics in towns by all citizens of the area in 1854. This all helped to remove some of the more obvious irritants, but still the basic tithe remained and thus the resultant problem.

26 Report of the Commissioners of Public Instruction, Ireland, H C 1834 () XXXIII, p 74. There is a slight discrepancy in the printed figures; they give the total population as 7,954,100 - it should be 7,954,160.

Ulster the problem was not so bad, in so far as the Church of Ireland was fairly numerous on the ground, but in some areas its numbers were infinitesimal. For example, 20% of the population of Ulster, 11% of the population of Leinster, 5% of the population of Munster and 4% of the population of Connacht belonged to the established Church.²⁷ In some of the dioceses the Church of Ireland population amounted to no more than one per cent, and percentages of four to five per cent were quite common in the three southern provinces.²⁸

The continuation of the campaign against the tithes, in the face of moderate reform led to the realisation by the Catholic hierarchy that the only way to be free from the imposition of the tithe was to effect the entire disestablishment of the Church of Ireland. The campaign against the church had continued almost unabated throughout the century. The Tithe War had gradually merged into the O'Connellite agitation for both repeal and disestablishment, and this in turn, was followed by a new organisation founded in 1856 by the veteran Irish politician, W J O'Neill Daunt. He was in communication with the Liberation Society in England and had certain support from the opponents of establishment in that country.²⁹ By the end of 1864, a new movement, the National Association was inaugurated and this time it had the active support of Archbishop Cullen of Dublin, and most of the hierarchy, although McHale of Tuam and Thomas Nulty of Meath both opposed it publicly. This new association, nevertheless, gained widespread support and the clamour for disestablishment grew.³⁰

27 Kevin Nowlan, 'Disestablishment: 1800-1869,' in Michael Hurley, S J, ed, Irish Anglicanism, 1869-1969, (Dublin, 1970), p 11.

28 Analysis of Church of Ireland strength is found in Akenson, Church of Ireland 1800-1886, Table 34, p 165.

29 W J O'Neill Daunt, Eighty-five years of Irish history, (London, 1886), p 130.

30 On the formation of the National Association, see, E R Norman, The Catholic Church and Ireland in the Age of Rebellion, (Ithaca, 1965), Ch 4. The Association has been described by Lee as 'a calm in a tea cup.' See his Modernisation of Irish Society, p 59.

The balance was finally tipped in favour of the position of the Catholic hierarchy by an unexpected source. Cullen's greatest fear and most implacable foes, the Fenians, may have had the effect of forcing the hand of Gladstone. It is certainly true that the activities of the Fenians dragged an unwilling English public into a position where it had to confront Irish grievance. Some years later, Isaac Butt was to claim that it was the Fenians which gave Gladstone the 'justification and cause' of his Irish policy. However, in Gladstone's own copy of the pamphlet he wrote 'no' in the margin beside this claim.³¹ Nevertheless, Fenianism acted as a catalyst upon the smouldering passions in Ireland, and at the same time pricked the consciences of many on the mainland.

In 1865 Gladstone had stated in parliament that in his opinion the position of the Church of Ireland could no longer be defended. However, he did not see disestablishment as a viable political issue until 1867. In that year he announced himself in favour of disestablishment during a debate inaugurated by Sir John Gray. At that time the Tory administration of Lord Derby was not seen as being in a very stable state. And whilst Gladstone was a member of Her Majesty's opposition, the Protestants in Ireland realised that it would only be a matter of time before they had to face an English Prime Minister who was in favour of the repeal of Clause Five of the Act of Union.

To meet this new threat a new organisation was founded in Ireland. On 18 January, 1868, an address published by Lord Bandon informed the country that a Central Protestant Defence Association had been founded within the nation's capital to fight against any proposed encroachment upon Protestant rights, especially disestablishment of the Irish Church.³² This association was centred on Dublin, and it was hoped that branches would quickly spread throughout the country. In February an Ulster Protestant Defence Association was formed to co-ordinate activities in that province, and the following month Fermanagh and Monaghan set up their own county defence associations.³³ The Madden family took an

³¹ Beckett, Making of Modern Ireland, p 364 n 1.

³² The address was carried in most of the Irish papers, both Conservative and Liberal.

³³ Impartial Reporter, 5 March, 1868, p 3.

active part in the new organisation. William Wolseley Madden was by now a prominent Orangeman, and his brother John Madden went to Dublin at the beginning of February for the first major meeting of the P D A. While he was there he had discussion with the Solicitor General for Ireland at Dublin Castle.³⁴

In many ways, the position of the Madden family in county Monaghan was unusual. Unlike the Orange Institution, the P D A had been formed purely to meet the present difficulties experienced by the church, and it took pains to disavow any links with Orangeism other than some of its members were Orangemen. And at a time when the Orange movement, especially in Belfast, was falling into the hands of the middle-classes, the P D A was firmly under the control of the gentry. It may have been significant that William Madden, the Orangeman, did not play the active role in the association undertaken by his brother John who was not a member of the Institution.

As 1868 continued, the prospect of disestablishment became more real. The Irish Conservative influence in parliament was not strong enough to withstand the force of the assault upon the church, and by 7 May, Gladstone's three resolutions had been carried.³⁵ However, the peers were able to muster enough support to have his Suspensory Bill³⁶ thrown out of the House of Lords on 25 June. The following month, parliament was prorogued and the contest switched to the hustings. In Ireland this meant that the sectarian lines were drawn with Catholics supporting the measure and the Episcopalians, supported by a large majority of the Presbyterians and other dissenting groups, opposing the reform of the Church of Ireland. The days of 1829 appeared to have returned and there was tremendous excitement throughout the country.

³⁴ John Madden's Diary, 5 February, 1868.

³⁵ The chain of events which led to the disestablishment of the church is to be found in many of the major text books of the period, contemporary newspaper reports and biographies of the leading politicians of the day.

³⁶ This bill was introduced by Gladstone on 13 May so as to stop new interests being created pending the passage of a disestablishment.

THE PARTY PROCESSIONS ACT

For some time the Protestants of Ireland had suspected that the English government, which should have been their greatest ally, was turning against them. Throughout the 1860s the major irritant for the Protestant population had been the Party Processions Act. The measure had been passed in 1850 and it made it illegal to hold meetings which would 'tend to provoke animosity between different classes of Her Majesty's subjects.'³⁷ In effect, it became illegal to parade the public highways while displaying any emblem or colour, or playing any tune which could be identified with a particular party. Under the influence of the Grand Orange Lodge, the Orangemen generally kept within the law. In 1864 however, a grand parade through the centre of Dublin to celebrate the laying of a foundation stone for the O'Connell monument clearly broke the law.³⁸ The previous year, 1 July 1863, a few mill-workers in Gilford, County Down, had demonstrated in breach of the PPA. In March 1864 the government brought an action against them for contravention of the act. This clear discrepancy in the implementation of the act led to an increased agitation in Ulster for its revocation.

³⁷ Cited in McClelland, 'The Later Orange Order,' in Williams, Secret Societies in Ireland, p 126.

³⁸ A collision between a large Catholic crowd returning from the Eucharistic Conference in Dublin, and a Protestant crowd, precipitated large-scale riots in Belfast in 1864.

This Protestant movement for the repeal of the P P A was led by a county Down landlord from Lecale named William Johnston.³⁹

³⁹ William Johnston, 1829-1902. Educated locally and at Trinity College, Dublin, where he graduated in 1852 with the degree of Bachelor of Arts. On 22 February, 1853 he married Harriet Allen, daughter of a county Kilkenny millowner. She died in February, 1861, and seven months later, in October, he married Arminalla Frances, second daughter of Rev Thomas Drew, a prominent Belfast minister and leading Orangeman. She died seven months later. A year later, in May, 1863, he married Georgina Barbara, daughter of Sir John Hay, bart.

While at T C D he was a member of the Committee of the Dublin Protestant Association and when he graduated he joined the Belfast Protestant Association. In July, 1854, he founded Downpatrick Protestant Association. He joined Ballydonnell L O L 1646 in 1848 and was made Worshipful Master in 1849. In the same year he was appointed District Lay Chaplain of Lecale District. In 1855 he was made a Deputy Grand Master of Ireland, and he became District Master of Lecale from 1857 until he died.

In 1853 he had been inducted into Royal Black Preceptory 39 in Dublin. When he returned to Ballykilbeg in 1854 he founded a Black Preceptory at Ballydonnell. In 1854 he became District Master of Lecale District Black Chapter and the following year he was appointed Grand Master of County Grand Black Chapter of Down. In November, 1855, he achieved the position of Most Worshipful Supreme Grand Master of the Grand Black Chapter of Ireland. The reason for his meteoric rise within the Black Preceptory (he joined in May, 1853 and became leader in November 1855) was that it was almost defunct. He used it as a power base from which to launch his own career.

Johnston wrote a number of anti-Popery novels and started two newspapers of a similar ilk. The second, The Downshire Protestant, gained some popularity. His publishing career was unsuccessful, however, and ruined him financially.

In 1857 Johnston opposed Richard Ker, the proprietor of Downpatrick for the seat but was defeated, 129 votes to one. In 1868, he successfully contested Belfast as an Orange candidate in opposition to the Conservatives and was elected. He held the seat until he was appointed Commissioner of Fisheries in 1878, when he resigned. His violent anti-Land League language led to the government's rescinding of his position, whereupon he contested South Belfast in 1885. He held that seat until his death in 1902.

In 1851 he had visited the site of the burning of the Protestant martyrs at Smithfield in London and,

I registered a vow, and breathed a prayer for strength to be so, that I would follow in the faith of the holy martyrs and wage war⁴⁰ against apostate Rome.

His whole political career henceforward was one of populist Protestant politics and opposition to Roman Catholicism.

As early as 1863 Johnston had urged the Grand Orange Lodge to sanction a massive demonstration which he hoped to plan to break the act. However, a letter from the Grand Master, Lord Enniskillen, was read to the Grand Lodge in which he specifically requested that the Institution do not act contrary to the law. As a result, Rev John Flanagan proposed, and William Wolseley Madden seconded, a resolution to the effect that a demonstration on 12 July would be injudicious and undesirable, although it finished with the suggestion that 'some measure should be taken.'⁴¹ Thus the pressure for concerted action continued throughout the 1860s. It was greatly increased by the fact that Fenianism grew both stronger and more visible in the south. Further, the authorities tended to ignore illegal Fenian demonstrations in areas where there were few Protestants and where an enforcement of the P P A would have led to serious disorder. The O'Connell demonstration, however, made the position of the Orange leadership almost untenable, with the result that the movement threatened to move outside of landlord control.

In an attempt to appease the rebels to some extent, the Grand Lodge entrusted the formulation of its Address to the country's Orangemen to William Johnston, Rev John Flanagan and Stewart Blacker. The choice of these three was deliberate. So as to quieten Johnston, he was put upon the drafting committee. Blacker was a nominee of the landlord party within the Grand Lodge and his grandfather had been at the battle of the Diamond in 1795. The family was very highly respected both within county Armagh and the Orange Institution. Flanagan was expected to hold

40 Cited in A McClelland, 'Johnston of Ballykilbeg,' unpublished M Phil, (N U U, 1978), p 12.

41 Report of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, Belfast, 11, 12 May, 1864, p 6.

a middle ground between the two.⁴²

The Address commenced by claiming that it was British rule which first introduced the influence of the Church of Rome into Ireland in the twelfth century. This was a popular Church of Ireland conception of the ecclesiastical history of the island.⁴³ The last section of the Address indicated Johnston's influence. Having discussed the activities of the authorities with regard to the O'Connell demonstration, it concluded,

But, brethren, the present state of things must cease; patience has its limits - indignity cannot always be submitted to. We must insist either upon the fair and impartial enforcement of the laws, or upon the Repeal of all laws which bear upon only one, and that the most loyal and worthy, portion of the population. We will not surrender our rights as British subjects, and we must take care that if Romish bishops and priests make the laws of Queen Victoria a nullity in Ireland, by processions which violate several plain and distinct Acts of Parliament, the Protestant subjects of Her Majesty must be free from the rigid persecution to which they have been for some time subject. 44

This was a forthright warning to the government, but it was not heeded. Consequently, the following year Johnston went another step further in his campaign when he actually issued an address calling upon the northern Orangemen to parade at the Maze to break the act.⁴⁵ Once again, the Grand Master appealed to the Grand Lodge 'to use their wisdom and authority in suppressing the intended meeting.'⁴⁶ A committee of five members of the Grand Lodge was set up to consider the proposed meeting, including Johnston and Flanagan. It decided that Johnston, by then County Grand Secretary of County Down, should withdraw his circular. Once again Enniskillen had managed to stave off the threatened revolt

42 Ibid, Dublin, 7, 8 December, 1864, p 38.

43 Ibid, Appendix I. See, for example, Rev John Flanagan, Ireland: Her Past Glories and Trials, and Probable Future, (Dublin, 1882).

44 Grand Lodge Report, May 1864, Appendix I.

45 Ibid, Armagh, 3, 4 May, 1865, p 6.

46 Ibid

by the Orangemen against the P P A, and Johnston backed down. A communication was then sent by the Grand Master to all Orangemen directing them not to walk in contravention of the Act. But the revolt was not stemmed and in 1865 Johnston wrote a letter to the Dublin Evening Mail in which he was highly critical of the actions of the Grand Master.⁴⁷ Once again, his activities were condemned by the Grand Lodge, and he promised never again to criticise Orange attitudes outside of a lodge-room.⁴⁸

Johnston was becoming, by this time, an infernal nuisance to the status quo within the organisation, and they took the unprecedented step of appointing a committee on Johnston's proposals. This must have been an indication to the Earl of Enniskillen that he was not in a totally unassailable position. The report of the committee (which included William Wolseley Madden) stressed that it was essential for the Institution to give support to parliamentary candidates who would advocate Protestant legislation and 'take an independent position in the House of Commons.'⁴⁹ Or, in other words, due to the inability of the Orange Institution to gain any support for the measures which it favoured from either of the two parties, particularly the removal of the P P A from the statute book, it recommended that the Orangemen have no ties with any political party but rather that they use their influence at elections to win concessions from candidates.

Johnston continued his activities outside the Grand Lodge, but on a muted level. He had gone as far as he could within the organisation without placing himself at risk of expulsion. In 1866 he got the support of the Belfast County Grand Lodge to hold a parade on 12 July, although not without considerable opposition.⁵⁰ The demonstration was held on Johnston's land at Ballykilbeg under the auspices of the Protestant Association and this provoked a storm within Orange leadership circles. Lord Arthur Hill, the landlord and Conservative MP for county Down 1845-1880, wrote to Johnston pleading with him to call off the demonstration.⁵¹

47 Ibid, Dublin, 6, 7, 8 December, 1865, p 6.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.

50 Henry Patterson, Class Conflict and Sectarianism. The Protestant Working Class and the Belfast Labour Movement 1868-1920, (Belfast, 1980), p 1

51 Ibid. Patterson, however, claims that the parade was held in Belfast by the Belfast Grand Lodge.

He did not and around 9,000 attended and heard addresses from Johnston and others, including George Hammond Whalley, Liberal MP for Peterborough.⁵²

Johnston was able to test the mood of the Orange rank and file in July 1866. It was clear from the number who were willing to attend the demonstration in Downpatrick that if he was to lead an illegal parade, then he would receive the support of the vast majority of Orangemen. Thus, all he had to do was to bide his time until the following July, and if there had been no remedial legislation by that time then he could take on both the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland and Her Majesty's government.

At the Grand Lodge meeting in Belfast in June 1867 an Address was adopted which stated that whereas it was clear that others might break the Party Processions Act, that the Orangemen must not emulate them.⁵³ Nevertheless, Orange anniversaries should be marked by members of the Order. This was a clear warning by the Grand Lodge against any attempt by the Orangemen in Ulster to break the Act. It now remained to be seen whether the independent spirit of the Orangemen would be sufficiently strong for it to ignore such a clear directive from its leadership. The outcome would depend upon the stance of Johnston in the month between the Grand Lodge address and 12 July.

Johnston decided that he would indeed hold a large parade. He chose the march from Newtownards to Bangor. By so doing, he was close enough to Belfast to be sure of support from that quarter, whilst he was in the jurisdiction of county Down which was in favour of breaking the ban. Further, this portion of the county was almost entirely Protestant, so there would be no sectarian riot to strengthen the government's hand. The success of the parade must have surpassed even Johnston's most sanguine hopes. Over 40,000 Orangemen paraded to Bangor, some from as far away as Downpatrick.⁵⁴

52 McClelland, Johnston of Ballykilbeg, p 34.

53 Grand Lodge Report, Belfast, 5th, June 1867, p 11.
See also letter from Enniskillen, Grand Master, in Dublin Daily Express, 27 June, 1867, collected in T C D, 'Thomas A Larcom Papers,' T C D 1710/40-49.

54 P R O N I, Minute Book of Pikestone LOL 1898, T 2573/2; the Lodge left at 4.00 am on the morning of the parade and returned 24 hours later. 'Brother Loftus Lintons feet gave up at Killinchy & a gate was borrowed & four men took it in turn to carry him home.'

Without doubt Johnston was already considering a political career by the summer of 1867. His ability to gain the backing of the Protestant working classes of Belfast, and the tenant farmers of the rural areas indicated that there was a potential for a candidacy. His uncompromising Protestantism would be an asset with Protestant voters, but it would hardly endear him to Roman Catholics. Nevertheless, it is possible that he was considering some sort of rapprochement with the Ulster Liberals, or vice versa. Five months after the Newtownards march he had written to Lord Dufferin, the leading Protestant Liberal peer in north-east Ulster,

For my part, I have never claimed for Orangemen, 'a monopoly of loyalty.' I believe in the loyalty of all [original unclear] in Ireland, & of many Ro. Catholics. Orangeism has been too long used as a mere tool for the Tory party, in Ireland; to a junction with which they have been impelled of the treatment they have received from the Liberal party.

. . . accord liberty of meeting and procession to all parties; punishing the aggressors on peaceable assemblages, whatever party they belonged to. These views I have ever expressed.

I do not ask that the Roman Catholics be imprisoned for their demonstrations. In the Bangor meeting, my sole object was to demand, & I hope obtain, the liberty for Orangemen that is given to Fenians. No government will ever prosecute 'green' processions: let us be⁵⁵ free, then, to have 'Orange' ones.

Johnston's plea for a revocation of the PPA was not unusual. However, the interesting passage in the letter was his discussion of the manner in which the Orangemen had been used as tools of the Tory party. He conceded that this led the Liberals to deal unfairly with them because they were in the enemy camp. These sentiments were in line with the Grand Lodge resolution regarding independent political action adopted in Dublin in December 1865.⁵⁶ But Johnston may also have been sounding out the Liberals in Ulster as to the possibility of support for an independent campaign against the Tories by himself.

On 17 August Johnston wrote to Thomas Larcom requesting that no-one be charged as a result of the Bangor march.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, Johnston and

55 P R O N I, Dufferin Papers, D.1071 H/B/F, Johnston to Dufferin.

56 See above, p 140.

57 TCD, Larcom Papers, TCD 1710/45, Johnston to Larcom, 17 August, 1867.

25 other Orangemen, mostly from Newtownards, were charged on 4 September, 1867 with a breach of the Party Processions Act. Of these, Johnston and 23 co-defendants were returned to Down Assizes. They were given the opportunity of signing a confession that they had broken the law and in return the prosecution would be abandoned. In total, 19 men agreed to sign the paper. Johnston and the other four were returned to trial. It was clear that the government hoped that it would not have to proceed with the trial, as it feared alienating its Orange supporters.⁵⁸ In February a close friend, Colonel Forde of Seaforde, asked Johnston to write an admission that he had broken the law and that he would place it before Lord Mayo and the government in the hope that they would abandon the prosecution. This Johnston refused to do.⁵⁹

At this stage he remained confident that he would not be imprisoned because he wrote to friends asking them if they would propose him for membership of the Ulster Protestant Defence Association.⁶⁰ And this was followed by a letter to the Marquis of Downshire with a request that he be permitted to address a meeting of the U P D A to be held on 5 March.⁶¹ But Downshire replied that he did not wish Johnston to speak to the association.⁶² On 25 February he attended the meeting of the Belfast District Orange Lodges, and he gave them the Downshire letter.⁶³ That evening he returned to Downpatrick where he presided over the District meeting of Lecale District Orange Lodge, "preparatory to the trials; a very useful meeting."⁶⁴

The case was scheduled to be heard at the Assize court in Downpatrick on 28 February. The evening before, Johnston was informed that the

58 On the Bangor procession and the subsequent court case, see, McClelland, Johnston of Ballykilbeg, Ch IV, passim.

59 P R O N I, Johnston Diaries, D 880/2/40, 10 February, 1868.

60 Ibid, 11 February, 1868.

61 Ibid, 15 February, 1868.

62 Ibid, 22 February, 1868.

63 Ibid, 25 February, 1868.

64 Ibid.

Attorney-General was to prosecute. This was the first time in 25 years that this had happened.⁶⁵ And even at this late stage "Overtures to 'plead guilty' & get off (were) rejected."⁶⁶ The case opened at 2 pm and the 19 were quickly released. Johnston was left with the other four men. Of these, two pleaded guilty and were released and Johnston and the remaining two co-defendants, Thomas Keatinge and William Mawhinney were found guilty. They were sentenced to one month in jail and were also requested to sign a declaration that they would be of good behaviour for two years, or else serve a subsequent month. Keatinge and Mawhinney petitioned for release which they quickly received, but, much to the chagrin of the Tory government, Johnston was determined to serve out his sentence. Johnston's incarceration was all the more unfortunate as it took place at the same time as that of Richard Pigott and A M Sullivan for seditious newspaper reports. Sullivan was given special treatment although he admitted that he should have been "classified for treatment with the vulgar herd of crime."⁶⁷ In any case, Johnston was to emerge from Downpatrick Gaol with a permanent place assured in Orange martyrology. This would stand him in good stead when Disraeli's government went to the polls at the end of the year.

Johnston's sojourn in jail was cut short due to the effect which it was having on his health. Consequently, on 22 April, he was visited by his family and informed that he was to be released. The government's motives may not have been entirely charitable. It was obvious that Johnston would use his release as an opportunity to expound upon his 'cruel treatment' at the hands of the government. Already on 4 March a group of radical Orange artisans had held an 'Indignation Meeting' in the Ulster Hall and called for Johnston to be returned as the next member for Belfast.⁶⁸ The call for the meeting would not be published by the leading Belfast conservative newspaper, the Belfast Newsletter,

65 McClelland, 'The Later Orange Order,' p 127.

66 Johnston's Diaries, 27 February, 1868.

67 Sullivan, New Ireland, p 297.

68 Patterson, Class Conflict and Sectarianism, p 2.

and when their reporter arrived at the meeting he was almost thrown out.⁶⁹ At this meeting the Belfast Working Men's Protestant Defence Association was formed, and it was expected that this same organisation would be present in Downpatrick to celebrate Johnston's release. What Johnston did in the face of this plan was to go home, but on 27 April, the day on which it had been expected that he would emerge from the prison, he,

Went into town to take part in the Johnston Demonstration from the Gaol gate. An immense crowd with band from Belfast & two banners brought me home. About 10,000 people. Dr Drew & Hunt (Chambre, his brother-in-law) were in the carriage with me. At home. A lot to lunch. Head ached after. 70

The banner Johnston referred to carried the inscription 'William Johnston, our future member, Defender of our Rights and Liberties.'⁷¹

Johnston's release was greeted with acclaim everywhere in Protestant Ulster. At a soiree held at Newbliss in county Monaghan to celebrate his release, Rev John Flanagan spoke of the impending disestablishment of the Irish Church. He recalled the protection which the church was afforded by the Coronation Oath and he then continued,

She should be reminded that one of her ancestors who swore to maintain the Protestant religion forgot his oath and his crown was kicked into the Boyne. We must speak out boldly, and tell our gracious Queen that, if she breaks her oath, she has no longer any claim to the Crown. 72

This statement was immediately seized upon by the Freeman's Journal which stated that Flanagan had actually threatened to toss the Queen's crown into the Boyne. The opportunity was too good to miss and John

69 McClelland, Johnston of Ballykilbeg, p 49.

70 Johnston's Diaries, 27 April, 1868.

71 McClelland, Johnston of Ballykilbeg, p 49.

72 Cited in McClelland, 'Later Orange Order,' p 129. At this meeting it was decided to set up a Killeevan and Newbliss branch of U P D A. The meeting also involved Presbyterians, including Rev. John Steen. See, Freeman's Journal, 21 March, 1868.

Francis Maguire,⁷³ the Liberal MP for Cork City then offered Her Majesty the protection of the nationalist people of Ireland against the treacherous Orangemen. Flanagan felt obliged to write to the Queen to explain his version of the speech. He also wrote to a number of Irish newspapers which gave him an opportunity to further expound his views. Through the columns of the Impartial Reporter, he defended Orange loyalty, and pointed out that the meeting in question had finished with three cheers for the Queen. He then asked,

. . . if a passive obedience to a monarch was forever cast to the winds by the Glorious Revolution of 1688, are we now to be called upon to recognise the omnipotence of Parliament or of a statesman?

And after a negative answer he suggested three courses which were open to the Protestants of Ireland:

First. To remain in the country under the iron heel of Popery, and take their chance of confiscation, fines, imprisonment and hanging, which one of the ablest organs of Popery in the Empire, has earnestly and cordially told us will be the result of Romanism gaining power.

Second. To emigrate in a body and seek asylum elsewhere as 175,000 Irish Protestants did from 1825-1834 disgusted with English statesmen and certain Irish landlords.

Third. Remain in the country, and by all means to maintain their rights and liberties, and hand them down to their children unimpaired or else seal them with their blood.

Which, sir, do you think they will adopt? I know.

74

Flanagan's utterances made a considerable stir at the time. His views were significant not because they were those of an unimportant eccentric, but rather because they represented the attitudes of the Orangemen and members of the Church of Ireland in Monaghan in particular, and Ireland, in general. For example, the view of his congregation was

73 John Francis Maguire, 1815-1872. Newspaper proprietor, author and politician; a lawyer, he was called to the Bar in 1843 but rarely practiced. Editor-founder of the Cork Examiner, he was MP for Dungannon, 1852-1865 and Cork 1865-1872. An associate of and supporter of Father Matthew, he was a campaigner for a system of National Education.

74 Impartial Reporter, 23 May, 1868, p 3.

recorded as follows,

In this year (1869) Rev John Flanagan published a pamphlet on the Coronation Oath and Bill of Rights in view of the Disestablishment of the Church of Ireland entitled - 'Voices of the Past - Warnings for the Future.' It contained some very plain language as to the vile plunder of the Church, but however strong the language few Irish Churchmen would be likely to find fault with the writer on that score: Mr Flanagan's denunciations were made the subject of⁷⁵ a question in the Commons' House of Parliament.

Throughout the first half of the year the Protestant forces were massing in an attempt to frustrate the attempts to disestablish their church. Local Protestant Defence Associations were founded throughout the island, especially in the north. And the language of confrontation became more pronounced. For example, at a great P D A meeting in Enniskillen in June, Captain William Wolseley Madden attacked the impending threat to the constitution and continued with a,

. . . call for combined action on the part of Protestants of all denominations in the United Kingdom for the defence and support of such institutions and endowments. The question is not, after all, one of mere Church disendowment - it is whether Protestantism should or should not exist. Whether the Pope or the Queen should⁷⁶ rule these realms.

And the Catholic segment of the population, for its part, felt that the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland might have ramifications far outside the issue of church reform. And although the disestablishment of the church was probably inevitable, the London Times was able to note that in Ireland this was not recognised and that it was felt on both sides that the contest had only just begun.⁷⁷ The Catholic clergy performed sterling work on behalf of the disestablishment cause, and subsequently pro-disestablishment candidates. On the other side the Episcopal clergy, the landlords and the Orange Institution all urged that Protestants unite and fight this menace to their constitution.

⁷⁵ Minute Book of Killeevan Parish Church, 1868, p 19.

⁷⁶ Impartial Reporter, 23 June, 1868, p 3.

⁷⁷ London Times, 2 July, 1868.

At the half-yearly meeting of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland held in Armagh, a resolution was passed that the Orangemen of Ireland would never, ". . . see their civil and religious liberties as enshrined in the Act of Union negated."⁷⁸ The assembled delegates also wrote to Disraeli stating their complete disagreement with Gladstone's proposed church disestablishment, and also calling for the repeal of the Ecclesiastical Titles Act. The Freeman's Journal was not impressed and an editorial in that paper noted,

The furor of the three days was owing to the Church. If the Orangemen raged throughout the dog days and talked out their tongues in threats, it would not check the progress of Church Reform. The Orange Lodge mouthed in the same way when Ascendancy was first attacked, and on every succeeding assault it was as menacing and impotent. No person cares a what it resolves. ⁷⁹

Nevertheless, the Orangemen were not about to abandon the campaign. The activities of the church's defenders continued and they were to culminate in a massive demonstration at Lisburn on 1 July. Around 30,000 people attended the protest meeting which was not well organised. Flanagan seconded a resolution that 'Roman Catholics sit in parliament and care nothing for their oath to the Crown.' During a stirring speech he suggested that the day might be fast approaching when it would not be thought safe to permit men who did not take such oaths seriously the right to sit in parliament at all. And he concluded,

. . . all the concessions that were given to the Roman Catholics had only emboldened them to demand more; they never would be satisfied till on the ruins of the Protestant Church of Ireland they established the Popish Church, and the ascendancy of that ⁸⁰ Church.

William Madden also spoke on the repugnant manner in which the Party Processions Act was enforced. A large contingent had travelled from Monaghan to the demonstration.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Grand Lodge Report, Armagh, 3, 4 June, 1868, p 16.

⁷⁹ Freeman's Journal, 8 June, 1868, p 3.

⁸⁰ Impartial Reporter, 9 July, 1868, p 4.

⁸¹ Monaghan County Minutes, Special Meeting to discuss arrangements for Orange Demonstration to be held in Lisburn, p 132.

As might be expected, with such momentous discussions and demonstrations being carried out in England and Ireland, passions ran high, especially in those areas where there was a minority population large enough not to remain unseen and unheard. Thus in county Armagh there were a number of Catholic demonstrations, one over two miles long, which underlined to the authorities and the Protestants of the area that the Orangemen were not the only force to be reckoned with in that county.⁸² In Clones a Protestant youth was stabbed,⁸³ whereas in Banbridge an Orange mob attacked a Catholic Church and some houses.⁸⁴ Both Protestant and Catholic mobs were reported to be visible on the streets in the evenings in various parts of the province.

In county Monaghan difficulties often occurred when a commemoration by one group would be attacked by the other. And with sectarian awareness so prevalent, it was not surprising that 1868 should be a year in which there would be considerable friction. Orangeism in the county was in a very healthy condition, there being around 2,000 members.⁸⁵ July was bound to be a month with considerable demonstrations due to both traditional parades and the impending Church Act. Monaghan had been well represented at Lisburn, and it had been decided at the Special Meeting of the County Lodge that as 12 July was a Sunday, the brethren should attend divine service and then commemorate the Boyne victory on Monday 13 July.⁸⁶ There was an Orange service in the parish church in Monaghan town at which Rev N R Bailey gave an appropriate sermon. The steeple of the church was decorated with an Orange flag as was the custom.⁸⁷ Outside a hostile crowd gathered and orange lillies were strewn upon the road so that the congregation had to walk upon them as they were leaving. Although there was no physical collision, this

82 Times, 10 July, 1868, p 3.

83 Impartial Reporter, 21 May, 1868, p 2.

84 Freeman's Journal, 9 June, 1868, p 3.

85 The annual returns for the Monaghan lodges contained in Monaghan County Minutes, pp 136-139 records 1,770 members with 12 lodges not reporting. McClelland in 'Orangeism in Monaghan' gives a total membership for 1870 of 1,951. As not all lodges reported back each year, it is possible that this number is slightly below the real total.

86 Monaghan County Minutes, pp 132-133.

87 Belfast Newsletter, 14 July, 1868.

incident helped to raise sectarian tensions in the county.⁸⁸

Very often if it looked to be impracticable or dangerous to hold a full county demonstration then there would be a number of district meetings. The Orangemen of the southern part of the county assembled at Drum where a large and enthusiastic meeting condemned Gladstone, the Party Processions Act and the Church Act. Drum, being a Protestant district, was not the scene of any disturbance.⁸⁹ In north Monaghan the Orangemen of Glasslough and Emyvale demonstrated at the glebe of Rev Mr Ashe, the rector of Donagh parish. They played fifes and drums but not party tunes, nor did they carry any flags or guns. Although the areas around Glasslough were mostly Protestant, some of the lodges from Emyvale and the barony of Trough may have had to travel through Catholic areas to get to the demonstration point but there was no trouble. Monaghan district decided to hold its commemoration of the Boyne victory outside the town at the demesne of Mr John Lindsay of Brandrum. Lindsay⁹⁰ does not appear to have been an Orangeman, but it was not unusual for the landed supporters of the order to offer the use of their lands for the July anniversary celebrations.

Once the day's festivities were over, one of the lodges, Ballinagall L O L 1142, formed up to march back to its lodgerooms in Dublin Street in the centre of the town.⁹¹ As the marchers were returning to the town they were met by two men who preceeded them into Monaghan to announce their imminent return. When the Orangemen reached the Diamond they were attacked by two mobs which had waited for that purpose. The Orangemen battled their way to their lodgeroom in Dublin Street at the far side of the Diamond, and although they received some severe punishment, they

88 P R O N I, Mic 371. This includes sworn affidavits by many of the participants in the affray used in the subsequent legal proceedings. Other details come from Belfast Newsletter, 16, 17, 20 July, 12, 14, 19, 20, 21, 24, 28 and 29 August.

89 Belfast Newsletter, 15 July, 1868.

90 John Lindsay is described in contemporary newspaper reports as a wealthy industrialist from Belfast who had recently bought Brandrum from the Coote family. Lindsay is not a Monaghan name. The Ulster Directory lists him as arriving in 1868 and he had ceased to live in Monaghan by the early 1880s.

91 For a detailed discussion of the July riot and subsequent retaliatory activities of each side see, C D McGimpsey, 'Border Ballads and Sectarian Affrays,' in Clogher Record, Vol X, No 4 (1982), forthcoming.

eventually reached their destination. They took refuge from the pursuing mob in the Orange Hall, and in a public house owned by David Baird, the head of a notorious Orange family. A general attack was then mounted upon Baird's public house, the Orange Hall, and the premises of another Protestant licensee in Dublin Street. The Orangemen then fired out at their attackers. As a result, six men and one woman were wounded, and one man, Thomas Hughes, was killed.⁹²

The family at the centre of the fracas, the Bairds, was well known in Monaghan. John Baird was a shoemaker and a spirit dealer. He was also an Orangeman, as were his two sons, John and David. His public house was a well known haunt of Protestants and Orangemen, and the Orange lodge had met there until May of that year when it had been able to rent rooms next door. This was the first Orange lodge to meet in Monaghan town, and the hall in Dublin Street was the first of its kind in the county town. The Bairds, and their cousins the Clarke family of Corness, were seen as the instigators of the introduction of Orangeism into the county town.

Monaghan town had been crowded on the day of the parade, it being a fair day. This meant that large numbers of people had come in from the surrounding areas. Hughes, for example, was from Leitrim townland near Tyholland, about three Irish miles from the town. Tyholland was a Fenian centre,⁹³ and it appeared certain that the Fenian brotherhood was involved in the attack. This in spite of the fact that Bishop Donnelly had preached a sermon, "on Orange displays & patience & forbearance," on Sunday 5 July.⁹⁴ The rioting continued in the town until midnight. The house of a Protestant widow was wrecked in the Shambles area, and another Protestant was severely beaten on his way home through the same district. It was decided that the local police and militia were insufficient to quell the disturbances, and 100 men of the Seventy-Second Highlanders arrived at 11.30 pm from Armagh city and they, in

92 Thomas Hughes was 23 years old. He followed the trade of farmer and butcher, and had come into town that day to buy a pair of shoes. Dublin Street was the centre for leather curing and boot-making in the town. Gavan Duffy has an exceptionally ill-informed account of the day's activities. See his, My Life in Two Hemispheres, Vol I, p 14.

93 See above, Ch II, pp 114-5.

94 P R O N I, Dio (RC)1/11B/11, 'Donnelly's Diary,' 5 July, 1868.

addition to a detachment of Scots Guards which was stationed at Monaghan barracks, were on the streets for the next two days.

The preliminary inquest upon the body of Hughes was set for Wednesday 15 July. A jury of 23 was sworn in, 14 of whom were Roman Catholics and remaining nine Protestants.⁹⁵ They were unable to agree upon a verdict. Initially, they wished to return a verdict of wilful murder against David Baird, but the coroner refused to accept it, and they finally voted 11:11 for an acquittal of any charges against Baird, with the remaining member of the panel being wise enough to abstain. The jury was then acquitted on Wednesday afternoon, but that evening some of them returned and the inquest was reopened⁹⁶ and this new panel agreed upon a verdict of wilful murder and also to an issuance of a coroner's warrant to this effect upon David Baird, his father, John Baird and his cousin, John Clarke. Clarke and John Baird were subsequently released, but the case against David Baird was to become the focus of the county's attention and the passions which were raised over the national issue of disestablishment complemented local sectarian aggravation.

In the afternoon after the dismissal of the first inquest panel, the body of Thomas Hughes was removed to his home. The coffin was carried by six young men, accompanied by a crowd of 3,000 people. They marched down Dublin Street and when they arrived at the door of the inn the coffin was placed on the road and the crowd,

knelt down in the street opposite Baird's house, and shouted 'Murder.' They then invoked the Virgin Mary to have the vengeance of heaven poured down upon Baird and his family and to make them⁹⁷ accursed upon the earth.

This scene lasted about twenty minutes after which the crowd continued upon its way. Two days later Father Bryan Duffy officiated at the internment

⁹⁵ Ibid, 16 July, 1868.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Impartial Reporter, 23 July, 1868, p 3, London Times, 18 July, 1868, and Belfast Newsletter, 16 July, 1868, p 5.

which was attended by about 300 people. This took place at Leitrim cemetery, and he reminded the people that he had warned them at Mass on the previous Sunday to keep well away from the Orangemen and not to become involved.⁹⁸

On the same day as the inquest into the death of Hughes took place, Bishop Donnelly issued a call to the Catholics of Monaghan to attend a conference on the events.⁹⁹ It was scheduled for 19 July in the Christian Brothers School in Monaghan. It was decided to set up a Protection Society and Donnelly gave a donation of ten pounds, and before the meeting was over, subscriptions totalled almost one hundred pounds.¹⁰⁰ Among those who attended and made donations to the fund were three of the Catholics members of the inquest jury which had recommended that the three Orangemen be charged with murder.¹⁰¹ The Orangemen, for their part, also started a fund to help to pay the legal expenses of the three. The treasurer was William Wolseley Madden, the Deputy County Grand Master. The total subscriptions were eventually enough to pay the entire legal costs of the Baird case. Donations were received from all parts of the three kingdoms, from America, the colonies and even thirty pounds from a Monaghan Orangeman who collected in Australia.¹⁰² Inevitably the existence of these two funds gave rise to suggestions that they were more for the prosecution of the other side than for defence.

Meanwhile in London events were moving inexorably towards a confrontation over the church issue. On the last day of July, Disraeli took the unprecedented step of proroguing parliament and the battle over disestablishment ceased to be fought from afar by the leaders of the Irish people, but crossed the sea to be fought out, sometimes literally, by both populations. Due to the fact that the general election would be fought under the provisions of Disraeli's Parliamentary Representation (Ireland) Act of 1867, which had lowered the franchise

98 Impartial Reporter, 23 July, 1868, p 3.

99 Donnelly's Diary, 14 July, 1868.

100 Ibid, 19 July, 1868.

101 Evidence of John McGlew, one of the rioters, a shoemaker, Dublin Street, to Monaghan PS court, 18 August, reported in Belfast Newsletter, 19 August, 1868. See also Dublin Daily Express, 15 August, 1868.

102 Monaghan County Minutes, p 148.

level from those holding property valued at ten pounds to 'over £4,' it would be November before an election could take place. Thus parliament did not meet again until 11 November when Disraeli dissolved it and appealed to the country.

Meanwhile in Monaghan, the rest of July and August saw the local courts involved in hearing the charges brought against the various parties incriminated in the rioting. The Orangemen who had been charged with a breach of the Party Processions Act had the charges dropped as the police were quite definite that the lodge's flag had been furled, and that no party tunes were played or party emblems worn. On 12 August David Baird entered a writ of habeas corpus on the grounds that the coroner's warrant and committal had been illegal, and he was granted leave to apply for a writ of habeas corpus.¹⁰³ Because of the riot and Party Processions cases, the inquest and the preliminary hearings into each aspect of the legal process, the county's attention was constantly focused upon the courthouse in Monaghan town.

During the hearing of Baird's appeal for leave to apply for a writ of habeas corpus, a large crowd gathered outside in Church Square and when Baird emerged the crowd attacked him. The intention of the mob was to lynch Baird, but the R I C, with the aid of Father L J O'Neill's¹⁰⁴ umbrella, were able to protect their charge.¹⁰⁵ Clearly the Catholics of the area, frustrated in their desire for revenge, were not confident that what they felt to be justice would be meted out by the Assize. The manner in which the Monaghan Assize was conducted was a matter of extreme irritation to the Catholic population of the county.¹⁰⁶ At that time in Ireland, the official positions were disproportionately concentrated in the hands of the Protestant segment of the population.

103 Impartial Reporter, 13 August, 1868, p 2.

104 Rev Lawrence J O'Neill, was at that time the Parish Priest of Monaghan town, and consequently one of the four Administrators of the diocese. He was later appointed Dean. See Irish Ecclesiastical Register, 1856-1890.

105 London Times, 13 August, 1868, p 4, and Belfast Newsletter, 14 August, 1868.

106 See below, pp 185-7.

The evening after Baird's appearance in court, on 13 August, an open-air demonstration was held at Killeevan glebe, the residence of Rev John Flanagan, to commemorate the Protestant victory at Newtownbutler and the lifting of the seige of Derry.¹⁰⁷ The meeting was chaired by W W Madden, who declared,

. . . the time will come and it is not too distant either . . . to declare whether our brethren, who are few in number in the vicinity of Monaghan, are to be trampled underfoot by Papist hordes. 108

This was probably a reference to the attempt to lynch Baird in Monaghan town on the previous afternoon, and also the mobilising of numbers of Fenians in the vicinity of the county town in preparation for the annual commemoration, in case the Orangemen whould attempt to parade in the town. Madden's speech was yet another example of the unfortunate rhetoric which was so common in Ireland in the nineteenth century. Rev Flanagan also spoke, claiming that Gladstone was the best recruiting sergeant that the Orange Order ever had.¹⁰⁹ A portion of scripture was read by a Rev Cowan, a Presbyterian minister, presumably one of the first clerics of that denomination to join the Institution, a process which would continue to increase over the next two decades.¹¹⁰ The Freeman's Journal drew attention to the meeting chaired by 'the choleric Captain Madden,' assisted by 'The Rev Flaming Flanagan' whom the journal described as,

A pretty specimen of your Evangelical clergyman is the Orange parson. The type is rare. A few of the species are yet to be found. 111

107 On the same day as the Siege of Derry was lifted, 12 August 1689, the Protestants of Fermanagh and Monaghan, who had remained at Enniskillen, won a decisive victory over the Jacobite forces at Newtownbutler. Thus in south Ulster 12 August was almost as important a date as 12 July. During the nineteenth century large parades were held on both these dates.

108 London Times, 14 August, 1868, p 7, reported that the demonstration was composed of Orangemen from Clones, Newbliss, Cootehill, Drum and Newtownbutler.

109 Ibid.

110 Ibid.

111 Freeman's Journal, 14 August, 1868, p 2.

So uncertain were the times that a crowd of 600-700 Catholics occupied the Diamond in Monaghan town because they believed that the Killeevan meeting was to be followed by a general assault upon the county town by the Protestants of Clones and vicinity.¹¹² Fortunately Father O'Neill and a number of curates were able to persuade the people that their fears were groundless and that it was safe to retire.

Although the United Kingdom would not have to go to the polls to elect a new government until November, it was clear throughout the second half of 1868 that a general election was imminent. Disraeli's prorogation of Westminster in July sent the whole of Ireland into a pre-election fever. By late June, names were already being bandied about in the press as prospective candidates for particular constituencies. On 26 June the Freeman's Journal carried an editorial entitled, 'Register, Register, Register.'¹¹³ By the month of August electoral preparations were well underway.

The importance of the 'Disestablishment Election' requires little explanation. It was essential for each side to return as many members as possible who were sympathetic to its respective cause. In Ireland the Conservatives realised that the sister island would come out in favour of disestablishment, so it was essential to show as united a front as possible. To this end, the Orange Lodges were very active in organising meetings especially in marginal areas. They were aided in this task by the Protestant Defence Association. On the Liberal side the Catholic Church was seen to throw its weight behind the pro-Disestablishment candidates. As early as May 1868 the National Association had prepared an Address to the Catholics of Ireland requesting them to support only men who were willing to vote for Irish church reform.¹¹⁴ And the crucial factor in the election would be the disappearance of any clerical support for independent candidates. The 1868 election was to be fought on a principle of hierarchy support for the Liberals. This was underlined on 3 November, when Cardinal Cullen publicly endorsed the two Liberal

112 London Times, 15 August, 1868, p 19.

113 Freeman's Journal, 26 June, 1868, p 2.

114 Norman, Catholic Church and Ireland in the Age of Rebellion, p 349.

candidates in Dublin. This endorsement was rapidly followed by the other bishops.¹¹⁵

The election in county Monaghan was all the more significant because it was the only contested county seat in the province of Ulster. In Irish terms it was of further importance as it contained almost equal numbers of Protestant and Catholic electors.¹¹⁶ In other words, the disestablishment question would decide whether or not the Liberal candidate would retain his seat. If enough of the old-style Liberal Presbyterians were willing to support a Liberal candidate, whether Cremorne or someone else, then the second seat of the county could be held. On the other hand, if the Presbyterians either abstained or voted Tory, then the gains of 1865 would be lost.

There was little doubt but that Charles P Leslie would again contest the seat. Lord Cremorne's position was less certain. On 8 June the Freeman's Journal had noted that he had voted against the Church Act during its fourth reading.¹¹⁷ This was followed on 18 June by a letter in the same paper which pointed out that Cremorne had not only voted against the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, but that he had also supported the removal of the Maynooth grant. It ended with the warning, 'Farney Men Remember.'¹¹⁸

The Conservatives had decided that Cremorne should not be permitted to be returned for the county without a contest. To this end, an election 'council of war' was held at Hilton Park, the home of John Madden, on Monday, 3 August.¹¹⁹ Throughout that week electoral plans were made with regard to Sewallis Evelyn Shirley contesting the second seat of the county as a running mate for C P Leslie. Shirley had published an Address to the Electors of the county in the Northern Standard

115 Ibid, p 348. See also D Thornley, Issac Butt and Home Rule, (London, 1964), Ch IV.

116 For the alteration in the Irish electorate in this period see, Brian M Walker, 'The Irish Electorate, 1868-1885,' in Irish Historical Studies, Vol XVIII, No 71, (March, 1973), pp 359-406.

117 Freeman's Journal, 8 June, 1868, p 2.

118 Ibid, 13 June, 1868, p 4.

119 Madden's Diary, 3 August, 1868.

on 18 July.¹²⁰ This had taken the Liberals somewhat by surprise, for as late as 22 June the Freeman's Journal had confidently predicted that neither Sir George Forster nor Shirley, the only potential Conservative candidate, would contest the constituency.¹²¹

Shirley's address pointed out that his father had represented the county previously, and that he was the son of one of the largest landholders in the county. He promised, to come forward,

. . . on the same Conservative principles which have ever been held by my family. Those principles are now being severely tried, the Protestant Constitution of the whole Empire is in danger. If elected as one of your Representatives, I will do my utmost to defend and support it, convinced as I am that true Religious and Civil Liberty as well as Progress can only be achieved and preserved under the glorious British Constitution which so many are now endeavouring to subvert.¹²²

He was thus coming forward, as the Freeman's Journal pointed out, as a true blue opponent of Lord Cremorne.¹²³ Leslie's position was well known. He had always shown himself to be a stalwart defender of the Protestant Ascendancy. And whereas he had yet to make his maiden speech in the House of Commons, he was a regular attender and always voted with the party whip. Leslie's address decried the fact that the Liberal party had defeated a proposal to increase the number of polling places in each constituency. This measure would most definitely have mitigated against the sort of electoral unrest which Monaghan had experienced in 1865. This issue for the eradication of election riots took greater prominence in Leslie's address than any other. It was only in the penultimate paragraph that he noted that,

. . . I should feel it, therefore, my duty to resist all such rash and hasty propositions; to uphold those Institutions with which our National Rights and Liberties are inseparably connected, and to assist in redressing and removing all proved inconveniences and anomalies.¹²⁴

¹²⁰ Northern Standard, 18 July, 1868 p 1.

¹²¹ Freeman's Journal, 22 June, 1868, p 3.

¹²² Northern Standard, 17 October, 1868, p 1.

¹²³ Freeman's Journal, 13 August, 1868, p 3.

¹²⁴ Northern Standard, 17 October, 1868, p 1.

In furtherance of Shirley's campaign his election organiser, John Madden, issued a printed address 'To The Independent Presbyterian Electors of the County Monaghan.'¹²⁵ This was, in effect, the text of two letters which he had written to the Northern Standard during the month of September.¹²⁶ The content of the handbill was entirely directed to the threat which the regium donum was under from the Liberal party. Madden reminded the Presbyterians that he had claimed at the hustings in 1865 that the Liberals would remove the state support for the Presbyterian clergy. This had subsequently been denied by Cremorne. The handbill then reproduced in abbreviated form a report of the debate on regium donum which had taken place in the House of Commons on 25 June 1868. It was clear that the Liberal party in England was not in favour of the regium donum from the report. And Madden's argument pointed out that even if Cremorne was to claim that he supported the grant, his party, the Liberals, if returned to power, would do all in its power to remove it. He concluded,

Say to those who ask you to vote for Lord Cremorne, that the Presbyterian Church requires of you your votes, and that every vote given to the Liberal party is a vote against the Presbyterian Church. I think the more you look at it the more you will see that this is so. Therefore, I say again, VOTE AS ONE MAN FOR COLONEL LESLIE AND MR SHIRLEY. The Presbyterians are a power in Monaghan, as they deserve to be, and long may they remain so. 127

The importance of the Presbyterian vote in the forthcoming election was crucial throughout the north of Ireland. There could be no doubt but that very many Presbyterians felt a bitter resentment towards the Church of Ireland. They had been involved in the tithe movement, and during the League of North and South the issue of support for the Established Church had excited the animosity of both Catholics and Presbyterians. In county Monaghan, for example, if the Presbyterians felt that they could not support a party which was pledged to retain for the Church of Ireland its preferential position, then the Conservatives would never regain the second seat. The attempt to ensure Presbyterian

125 Copy in author's possession. Further copies can be found in P R O N I, D.3531/E/1, 'To The Independent Presbyterian Electors of the County Monaghan,' dated 29 September, 1868.

126 See Northern Standard, 5 and 20 September, 1868.

127 Ibid.

support for the Conservative candidates was strengthened by the public support of the Tory candidates in Belfast by Rev Henry Cooke, In an election address to the people of Ulster, he exhorted,

Vote for no man, however respected and honoured, who attempts to cloak his views on the great question of the day. Principles and not men, must now be your motto. I have read the addresses of Sir Charles Lanyon and Mr Mulholland to the electors of Belfast, and I entirely approve of them. The principles stated in them are mine, and as such commend themselves to all true conservatives. Fellow-Protestants, be faithful to your country, to your religion, and to your God. Be watchful against the insidious advances of Popish error and despotism; be united in defence of liberty and truth; and he who ruleth King of Nations will bless and prosper your case. 128

Cooke's views were of particular relevance to the Belfast contest where the Presbyterian element was thought to be in danger of voting for Johnston. The Orange leader was aware that his strength lay with the working-class Orangemen, many of whom were Presbyterian. In Belfast there was particular importance to the religious dispute between the two major Protestant denominations. The Conservatives had traditionally fielded two candidates at election time, one Church of Ireland and one Presbyterian. In 1868 they chose Sir Charles Lanyon, the sitting member, and a member of the Church of Ireland. As a running mate they chose Samuel Gibson Getty.¹²⁹ He was a Presbyterian and had been Mayor of Belfast from 1856-1858. However, he refused the nomination, assuming that it would be offered to another Presbyterian Conservative, John Lyttle who was in the grocery trade and had been Mayor of the city from 186 . Instead, the Tories chose John Mulholland, owner of the York Street Spinning Mill, the largest flax spinning mill in Ireland. His nomination did much to bring a class conflict into the contest.¹³⁰ But more importantly, Mulholland was a convert from Presbyterianism to the Church of Ireland, and as High Sheriff of county Down, he had organised a resolution against party processions immediately after Johnston's conviction.

128 The address was printed in most of the Protestant papers in Ulster. This quotation is taken from Impartial Reporter, 29 October, 1868, p 3.

129 On the 1868 Belfast election, see, McClelland, Johnston of Ballykilbeg, Ch V.

130 Patterson, Class Conflict and Sectarianism, p 3.

By August it had become clear that the Tories in Belfast would have difficulty in holding the Presbyterian and Orange votes. The Grand Orange Lodge of Down had initially endorsed Lanyon,¹³¹ and it was felt that when Getty refused the nomination it should have been offered to Johnston. When this was not done, endorsement of Lanyon was revoked and Johnston alone was endorsed.¹³² Overtures were made by the Liberals as to a joint campaign. On 10 September, Johnston received a private letter from Thomas MacKnight, the editor of the Northern Whig.¹³³ This was followed by another letter on 12 September,¹³⁴ and a private meeting in Belfast at which MacKnight offered Johnston five hundred pounds towards his election expenses.¹³⁵ In addition, the reports of Johnstone meetings carried in the Northern Whig proved 'most pleasing.'¹³⁶ The Conservative Belfast Newsletter, on the other hand, remained neutral with regard to Johnston although it attacked McClure, the Liberal candidate. The Newsletter could not afford to attack Johnston because there was the possibility that his supporters, who each had a second vote, would cast in favour of one of the Conservative candidates. But that was a question which would not be answered until the electors of Belfast went to the polls.

In Monaghan it was clear that Shirley's campaign, spearheaded by Madden, could well unseat Cremorne, who would receive virtually no votes from members of the Church of Ireland except for his own tenants. With Catholic voters he had badly damaged his position by voting against disestablishment of the church. This only left the Presbyterians, who, as we have seen,¹³⁷ were somewhat susceptible to a cry for Protestant unity at election time. Thus one of Cremorne's major supporters, Edward Lucas of Castleshane summoned a meeting for the purpose of, ". . . a

131 Sir Charles Lanyon had been returned in 1866 in place of Sir H McC Cairns, QC who had been appointed Attorney General for England. A famous architect, he retired from politics upon his defeat in 1868.

132 Impartial Reporter, 12 November, 1868, p 2.

133 Johnston's Diaries, 10 September, 1868.

134 Ibid, 12 September, 1868.

135 Ibid, 14 September, 1868.

136 Ibid, 15 September, 1868.

137 See above, p 240.

quiet discussion in the interest of the Conservative party and of the County in general."¹³⁸ Ostensibly this meeting was to consider the ways in which a contest could be avoided and thus ensure that there was no repetition of the rioting which occurred at the 1865 election. In actual fact, the supporters of Mr Shirley recognised that it was going to be composed of men who would be favourable to Lord Cremorne. A document had already been circulated around the county requesting that Cremorne be accepted by the Conservatives as the running mate for Colonel Leslie.¹³⁹ To counteract this threat to Shirley's candidacy, Madden wrote again to the Northern Standard backing Shirley's right to represent the county. He pointed out that Shirley's father had been the county's MP and reminded the electors that,

. . . Mr Shirley represents, if not the largest, at least one of the largest interests in this county . . . It is clear that no man could have so strong a claim upon those resident on his own¹⁴⁰ property, and in his own immediate neighbourhood as Mr Shirley.

He then continued that whereas Cremorne had voted with the Conservative Party in the past, that he had also voted with the Liberals. On balance, it would be better to return a Conservative MP than a Liberal with Conservative leanings.

Madden and many of the Shirleyites decided that they would attend the meeting organised by Lucas in Monaghan town on Tuesday, 18 August. However, they were frustrated in their desire. With the result that,

A large body of highly respectable gents, moderate and sensible, resolved to call upon Mr Shirley to withdraw in order to prevent the recurrence of such sad scenes as were witnessed at the last election, and still more recently when sectarian animosity showed itself as fierce as ever. Another body of gents, equally numerous and influential, attended to oppose this pacific policy, and were not admitted. They are more determined than before to return a second out-and-out Conservative along with Mr Leslie. The two bodies exchange recriminations, and are openly arrayed against one another.

141

¹³⁸ John Madden; 'To the Magistrates, Clergy, Landed Proprietors and Electors,' handbill, in author's possession. See n 124.

¹³⁹ Northern Whig, 1 August, 1868, cited in Hanrahan, Irish Electioneering, p 58.

¹⁴⁰ Northern Standard, 8 August, 1868, cited in Walker, Parliamentary Representation of Ulster, p 211.

¹⁴¹ London Times, 22 August, 1868, p 8.

Madden recorded in his Diary that he and a number of other gentlemen had been refused entrance to the meeting.¹⁴² And, as noted above, those gentlemen, in their collective wisdom, who were admitted, adopted a number of resolutions among which was one which called upon Shirley to retire from the election. This was the result which Madden and the other supporters of Shirley had feared. It was the reason why they had decided to attend the meeting in the first place. What is unclear is whether or not the meeting was really an attempt to find an agreed policy on behalf of the Conservatives of the county, or if it was in fact a ploy by backers of the Cremorne interest to remove the biggest threat to their candidate's chances of success. The suggestion that Lucas had called the meeting simply for Cremorne's benefit, was reported in the press, and it prompted him to write to the journals in Ireland contradicting this claim. In a letter to the Belfast Newsletter Lucas wrote that he was a friend of the Cremorne family, but that he had never supported it politically due to the fact that he was a Conservative and the Cremorne family was Liberal.¹⁴³ Furthermore, he pointed out that the circular which announced the meeting of 18 August had not been issued by himself, but by his son Edward William Lucas and a number of other gentlemen. He continued,

At the last election my previous directions to my land agent were to acquaint all my tenantry who might inquire my wishes that I meant to propose Colonel Leslie, and to plump for him.

I did propose Colonel Leslie, and I did plump for him, taking care to be the first man polling in the Monaghan booth, in order that my tenantry might with certainty know my wishes. I did not attempt to control them in any way.

. . . I am of the opinion that, in the present excited state of this county as to religion and politics, no sensible man having regard for the general interest of this county should seek to stir ¹⁴⁴ up a contest.

Lucas clearly wished the actions of the meeting and its resolutions not to be construed as open support for Cremorne, but rather as a political act by independent and concerned Conservatives. Nevertheless, his letter

142 Madden's Diary, 18 August, 1868.

143 Belfast Newsletter, 27 August, 1868.

144 Ibid.

brought an anonymous reply from a Monaghan reader who pointed out that Lucas' plumping for Leslie, and subsequently that of his tenantry ensured that Forster would not be elected. If Lucas had really wished to aid the Conservative cause in the county, then he should have requested his tenantry to vote for both Leslie and Sir George Forster.

Back in Monaghan the deputation which was formed to take the resolution to Mr Shirley and consisting of E W Lucas, R C Leslie-French among others, presented itself at Lough Fea shortly after the meeting. It was met by S E Shirley who entertained it cordially but refused to have his name removed from the election.¹⁴⁵ In addition, Shirley's lawyer, Mr Cecil Moore wrote to the Dublin Daily Express stating that his client would not retire.¹⁴⁶ Shirley personally wrote to the Northern Standard in a similar vein.¹⁴⁷

Cremorne was reported to have started an active canvas in the last week in August.¹⁴⁸ This was possibly delayed until after the Shirley visit. Once it became clear that Shirley would not retire Cremorne immediately started to assess his support. On Tuesday 1 September, he visited Carrickmacross, accompanied by the Parish Priest, Father J J Hughes. The town of Carrickmacross and the barony of Farney was an area which, being overwhelmingly Catholic, was strongly Liberal. This area would indicate whether or not Cremorne's stance upon the Church issue had cost him his political future. As late as 1868 the political labels of candidates proved to be less significant than might be imagined. As early as 3 July the London Times had noted that the election was seen as "predestined to determine what shall be the national policy towards the Irish Church and the Irish people."¹⁴⁹ It was thus not merely a contest between two British parliamentary parties. The future

¹⁴⁵ Belfast Newsletter, 26 August, 1868.

¹⁴⁶ London Times, 27 August, 1868, p 10.

¹⁴⁷ P R O N I, 'Shirley Papers', D 3531/B/3- cutting of letter of S E Shirley to Editor, Northern Standard. Full cataloguing of a lot of the Shirley Papers has not yet been completed.

¹⁴⁸ London Times, 27 August, 1868, p 10.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, 3 July, 1868, p 9.

history of Ireland would be decided by the results within the island. In a similar vein the Freeman's Journal described the election as 'the great contest between Orangeism and Liberalism.'¹⁵⁰ But the Liberalism which the Freeman's Journal supported was not the same Liberalism as that espoused by Lord Cremorne. Throughout Ireland the Bishops actively encouraged the Liberals to select 'good' candidates.¹⁵¹ This view was summed up by Bishop Kiernan in a letter to the clergy in county Louth in which he implored the clergy and Roman Catholic voters of that county to vote for Liberals against 'the Established Church and the Ascendancy.'¹⁵²

As a result of his treatment at the Monaghan meeting Madden issued a handbill addressed, 'To the Magistrates, Clergy, Landed Proprietors, and Electors of the County of Monaghan,' in which he discussed the 18 August meeting and the resolutions which it had adopted. After a long preamble, Madden pointed out that the rioting at the last election was principally the result of Cremorne mobs which had come in from outside the constituency. This was a claim which the available evidence tends to bear out.¹⁵³ Madden then turned to Cremorne and the Liberal party's opposition to two measures brought in by the Tory government during the preceding session. The first had been that balloting should be upon a system of home voting as was the case with the elections to the Poor Law Boards, and the other was that the number of polling places should be increased so as to stamp out mob violence at election time. This second measure was one which Leslie had given prominence to in his election address.¹⁵⁴ Of the first proposal it can be said that it would have led to greater landlord influence at election time and might have mitigated against the introduction of the secret ballot. However, the second proposal was, like the secret ballot, adopted soon after, and there can be no justification in the Liberal party's opposition.

¹⁵⁰ Freeman's Journal, 18 November, 1868, p 2.

¹⁵¹ Norman, The Catholic Church and Ireland in the Age of Rebellion, pp 345-346. Thornley, Isaac Butt and Home Rule, pp 37-39.

¹⁵² Freeman's Journal, 14 November, 1868, p 2.

¹⁵³ See above, Ch II, pp 118-121.

¹⁵⁴ See above, p 158.

In his handbill Madden questioned Cremorne's reasons for opposing so needed a reform. He concluded by stating that the shoddy treatment which Mr Shirley received had made some of Lord Cremorne's erstwhile supporters change sides.¹⁵⁵ Throughout the month of September the pressure was on Cremorne to withdraw. He could expect no aid from the Church of Ireland community of which he was a prominent member. Similarly it was uncertain to what extent the Presbyterians would favour his candidacy. They were a smaller body than the members of the Church of Ireland, but they were very closely knit. On the one side there was the Presbyterian acceptance of the view that the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland was simply one stage in the gradual dispossession of the Protestants of Ireland in favour of the Catholics. On the other hand the Presbyterians had indignantly viewed the obligation to pay tithes to the Established Church. However, when William Monsell, the Liberal MP for Limerick county, had introduced a Burials Bill during the previous session which would permit Presbyterian clergymen to officiate at Presbyterian burials within the confines of Church of Ireland graveyards, it was opposed by the Irish Conservative members.¹⁵⁶ Nevertheless, the Freeman's Journal wrote,

Presbyterians, indeed, should come forward and lend their aid in rivetting more closely the chains of their bondage to a rampant episcopacy . . . Presbyterians should come forward and give their assistance to strengthen the power of that church which not so long ago tried to make their children bastards! Presbyterians should now come forward, and with all their might, help to prolong the tyranny and usurpation of that church which can boast itself of such a man as Rev H Stewart, who has recently treated 'his dearly beloved Presbyterian brethren,' the Rev Mr Arnold and the Rev Dr Knox in a truly Christian spirit for worshipping God at the open graves of deceased Presbyterians in an Episcopalian¹⁵⁷ graveyard.

On the other hand there was the belief abroad in Ulster that support for the Liberal party was de facto a vote for the allies of Cardinal Cullen. It was this card which Madden had played in his handbill which

¹⁵⁵ John Madden, 'To the Magistrates, Clergy, Landed Proprietors and Electors of the County of Monaghan,' handbill, dated 28 August, 1868.

¹⁵⁶ Thornley, Isaac Butt and Home Rule, p 35.

¹⁵⁷ Freeman's Journal, 1 August, 1868, in Larcom Papers, TCD 1710/47.

had been directed to the county's Presbyterians on 29 September.

The meeting of 18 August and the consequent public debate over the 'conservative' nature of the assembly did irreparable damage to Cremorne's chances. The suggestion that at least some of the Monaghan Conservatives were willing to support the Liberal MP could not have helped his credibility with his supporters of 1865, the very vast majority of whom was Roman Catholic. At the very best the events surrounding the Conservative meeting indicated that Cremorne was willing to treat with the Conservatives. At worst it suggested that there was no difference between a Whig landlord like Cremorne and a Tory of similar standing like Leslie or Shirley. As a result, Cremorne found that he was unable to attract the Catholic voters to his campaign. The election was to be fought on the issue of the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, and Cremorne had always made it clear that he would never consent to the disestablishment and disendowment of his church.

As a result, it came as hardly surprising when Cremorne announced on 10 October that he had decided to retire from the contest. He pointed out,

The responsibility of the evils attendant on a contested Election would no doubt rest mainly on those, who, contrary to the wishes of many among their own ranks, have provoked the strife; but so deeply does even a share in this responsibility weigh upon me, that I have felt it right most closely to calculate the probable results of the struggle; and finding that under present exceptional circumstances, my prospects are not such as I can confidently rely¹⁵⁸ upon for success . . .

The suggestion was that the fault lay with those who had precipitated the conflict by placing Shirley's name before the electorate. But the key to Cremorne's decision not to stand was contained in the last line above, 'my prospects are not such as I can confidently rely upon for success.' The Northern Standard quickly picked up on this point and in an editorial it suggested that the exceptional circumstances which Cremorne referred to was that he had alienated his chief supporter, Bishop James Donnelly.¹⁵⁹ This view was given further credence by a

¹⁵⁸ Northern Standard, 17 October, 1868, p 1.

¹⁵⁹ Northern Standard, 10 October, 1868, cited in Walker, Parliamentary Representation of Ulster, p 211.

letter which subsequently appeared in the Belfast nationalist journal, the Northern Star, signed 'R C Elector' which suggested that his support of the Church of Ireland had alienated the Liberal voters of county Monaghan.¹⁶⁰ Without the endorsement of the Bishop of Clogher there was no possibility of Cremorne being able to carry the seat, as large numbers of Catholic voters would not turn out. Thus Cremorne and his supporters had out-maneuvred themselves and not only had they been unable to persuade the Shirleyites to withdraw, but they had also destroyed his power-base within the Catholic community.

On 13 October, the Northern Star, which was a Belfast based nationalist journal whose editor, Andrew J McKenna was from Monaghan, carried an editorial entitled 'Why Slumbers the Faithful.'¹⁶¹ It bemoaned the fact that Lord Cremorne had decided not to contest the constituency. However, it also suggested that he had expected far too much of the Catholic electors of Farney that they should support him when he was in favour of the Church Establishment. The article suggested the ambivalent feelings which Monaghan Liberals enjoyed over the departure of Cremorne. On the one hand Cremorne was an avowed supporter of the Church of Ireland's position and as such could not expect the support of the Catholic electors of the county. On the other, the victory of 1865 had been a memorable one, and one which indicated that the county of Monaghan could readily be persuaded to return another Liberal to parliament in 1868. The real difficulty was to find a Liberal who would command the support of the Bishop of Clogher and thus the Catholic electorate, whilst also attracting enough Presbyterians to the Liberal cause as to ensure victory.

In reporting that Cremorne was no longer in the running for the Monaghan seat the London Times claimed that it was the antipathy of the Orange voters which had forced him to retire, and it confidently predicted that Monaghan would now be left uncontested at the forthcoming election.¹⁶² The problems which the Liberals faced were recognised by the Northern Standard in an article on the prospects of a Liberal candidate for the county. It pointed out that,

160 Northern Star, 24 October, 1868, cited in ibid.

161 See editorial in Northern Standard, 17 October, 1868, p 1, entitled, 'The Northern Star on County Monaghan Election Politics.'

162 London Times, 14 October, 1868, p 8.

. . . Lord Cremorne commanded the votes of several of our landed gentry, and some few of the clergy of the Established church, together with a host of tenants, who were influenced by their landlords, all of whom, gentry, clergy, and tenants, are supposed to be Conservatives, or at least, moderate Whigs, in politics. Now, in the event of a candidate being put forward by the Roman Catholic clergy, it is just as well known, that he would have the votes of not one of these gentry, clergy or tenants.

What then is the chance of success for a nominee of the Romish priests? Just nothing at all. 163

The Standard reasoned that all moderate men would vote for the Conservative candidate, and the contest would then assume its 'true and healthy aspect' as a contest between the forces of order, prosperity and true nationality, and on the other side the forces of priestly dictation, retrogression and servitude.

The view that there would be no contest in the county seemed to gain ground. It was believed, as the Standard suggested, that the only hope for a Liberal had been Lord Cremorne supported by the Catholic clergy of the diocese. Interest in the local political scene diminished considerably. The Northern Standard, for example, virtually did not mention the county election again. The columns of the paper were filled with reports of the contest in Belfast which was stealing the headlines throughout Ireland. In Ulster, at any rate, it was recognised that Johnston and McClure were fighting a united battle for the tenant farmers and the industrial classes against the landed and urban elites which controlled the politics of the province. If Lanyon and Mulholland could be defeated, then there was a possibility that the northern half of the island could approach the sort of 'class politics' which were emerging in industrial Britain.¹⁶⁴

Throughout the rest of the month of October it was confidently predicted in Monaghan that there would be no contest. In its discussion of the probable outcome of the forthcoming election the London Times pointed out that there was a loss of one Liberal seat in Monaghan

163 Northern Standard, 17 October, 1868, p 1.

164 On the emergence of class politics in the Belfast election see, Patterson, Class Conflict and Sectarianism, pp 3-6.

which was not being contested by that party.¹⁶⁵ And the Northern Standard was able to confidently report that the rumours of an impending Liberal candidate and canvas of the constituency was nonsense.¹⁶⁶ The Northern Star had announced on 24 October, a week before the Standard denial, that the Catholic clergy of Monaghan, not wishing the Conservatives to have a walkover victory in the election were frantically searching for a replacement for Cremorne.¹⁶⁷

Eventually an election address was printed on behalf of a Liberal candidate for county Monaghan. It appeared in the Northern Star of 5 November, and announced that William Gray, a hotelier from Ballybay would be the Liberal party standard bearer in the county.¹⁶⁸ The Standard would hardly give credence to the report. It suggested that the address was but 'an artful dodge' on the part of Gray who had no claim upon the electors of the county; "his position in society is well known and his antecedents are not of a high character."¹⁶⁹

It was no wonder that the Standard should show such surprise at the selection of Gray as the Liberal candidate. William Gray was the brother of Edward Warren Gray who had been charged with the murder of a Catholic during a riot at Castleblayney station on the day of the previous Monaghan election in 1865.¹⁷⁰ In addition, both were sons of the notorious Sam Gray. He had been involved in organising the Protestants of south Monaghan at Ballybay to refuse admission to Lawless and the O'Connellites. During an argument over a will in 1841 which went to legal arbitration a Catholic who had been a witness for Gray's legal adversary was shot dead as he walked through the town.¹⁷¹ Gray was found not guilty. It would hardly be an overstatement to suggest that the shooting of at least one Catholic was a family tradition with the

¹⁶⁵ London Times, 24 October, 1868, p 10.

¹⁶⁶ Northern Standard, 31 October, 1868, p 1.

¹⁶⁷ Northern Star, 24 October, 1868, cited in Walker, Parliamentary Representation in Ulster, p 212.

¹⁶⁸ Reported in Northern Standard, 7 November, 1868, p 1.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ See above, Ch II, p 120.

¹⁷¹ McClelland, 'Orangeism in Monaghan,' p 389.

Gray family. Nevertheless, there was a Liberal streak to their character. The Tenant League dispute in the area had been over which hotel in which to hold meetings - William Gray's Duke of York Hotel which was famous for its sign which depicted King William III, or the hostelry of Edward Gray who subsequently gained notoriety after the Castleblayney affair.¹⁷² In any case, there being so much blood on the hands of the Gray family made William Gray a surprising choice.

At the County Monaghan Orange Lodge which was held in Campbell's Hotel, Dublin Street, Monaghan, a letter was read to the delegates from the Assistant Grand Secretary of Ireland regarding the forthcoming general election. It included a number of queries which were to be put to each prospective Conservative candidate.¹⁷³ The County Secretary informed the body that Colonel Leslie had replied favourably to each question which had been put to him. S E Shirley was not an Orangeman, and in his reply he stated that he agreed with the first two questions, but that as the third question related to the rules of the Orange Institution that he could not answer until he knew what the rules of the Orangemen contained. This was accepted as satisfactory by the Monaghan Orangemen, and after some further business the lodge dispersed.

Notwithstanding the belief that his candidature was a farce, Gray continued on his quest for the honour of sitting at Westminster as one of the representatives of the county of Monaghan. He further upset the county's Conservatives by announcing that he was in favour of disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of Ireland. The Northern Standard was also displeased at the prospect of the voters having to go to the polls in such inclement weather.¹⁷⁴ On 10 November Gray held an election meeting in Monaghan town¹⁷⁵ and he took the opportunity to visit Bishop Donnelly. Without his support there was no point in even addressing the constituency as there would be little aid from the county's Catholics

¹⁷² The manner in which Gray carried out one of his shootings, made his escape and hid the weapon was recently described in an oral interview.

¹⁷³ Monaghan County Minutes, 10 November, 1868, p 133.

¹⁷⁴ Northern Standard, 14 November, 1868, p 1.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

if Donnelly did not indicate some sort of countenance to his campaign. Donnelly noted in his diary that Gray called and asked him not to oppose his candidature and that "I promised just that."¹⁷⁶ In other words, the Bishop was less than excited about the proposed campaign. The tactic of promising not to oppose a candidate was often resorted to when the local bishop was unwilling to place his own reputation on the line with that of the prospective politician. This meant that the people of the diocese were at liberty to aid Gray if they so desired, but that there was no compulsion so to do. In some contests the Bishops were so keen that a particular candidate be elected that they would issue a directive to the diocesan clergy to openly support his campaign, and this would ensure that only the most brave of the faithful would vote for an opponent. A declaration not to oppose, in effect stated that the clergy would not be compelled to openly canvass, but that they would similarly not openly oppose. In this instance, William Gray was now left to his own devices in the task of persuading the Catholics of Monaghan to support him.

At the time of the 1865 election in Monaghan the then Liberal candidate, Vesey Dawson, received a total of 2,397 votes. It was reported at the time that they were almost entirely Catholic votes. It can be assumed, at least, that there were 2,000 Roman Catholic voters in the constituency at that election. By 1868, after the passage of Disraeli's Reform Act, the electorate of the county of Monaghan had increased but little. The measure was a great democratic reform for the parliamentary boroughs. The three major effects of the bill were to reduce the franchise restrictive level from £8 to 'over £4', to introduce a lodger franchise in the boroughs and to alter the boundaries of some of the boroughs.¹⁷⁷ This meant that the county of Monaghan would be little altered. For example, in 1862 the county's electorate totalled 5,370, and this had increased to 5,623 by 1872.¹⁷⁸ And the number of electors in the county has been noted as 5,591 at the time of the 1868 election.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁶ Donnelly's Diary, 10 November, 1868.

¹⁷⁷ Brian M Walker, 'The Irish Electorate, 1868-1915,' in Irish Historical Studies, Vol XVIII, No 71, (1973) p 359.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, Table 3, p 377 and Table 5, p 381.

¹⁷⁹ Walker, Parliamentary Representation in Ulster, p 212.

Disraeli's measure of parliamentary reform left the Irish county constituencies almost untouched.

Nomination day in the county was set for Friday 20 November, polling would take place on Monday 23 November, and the following day should see the votes tabulated.¹⁸⁰ Because of the staggered nature of polling in the nineteenth century, by the end of the week preceding the election in Monaghan county the Freeman's Journal was able to report that Ireland had returned 41 candidates in favour of disestablishment as opposed to 12 opponents of the measure.¹⁸¹ The Northern Standard, for example, was able to report that as of Friday, 20 November, 223 Liberals and 104 Conservatives had been returned to serve in the Imperial parliament.¹⁸² In other words, the tide had already set in heavily against the Conservative cause at Westminster before the Monaghan electors went to the poll.

Nomination took place in the Monaghan County Courthouse, in Monaghan town.¹⁸³ It was presided over by the High Sheriff, Sir Thomas Barrett Lennard. Charles Powell Leslie was proposed by C Leslie French of Ballybay, and seconded by Edward Richardson of Monaghan. The French family was the territorial landowners of Ballybay, and perhaps he was chosen to propose Leslie so as to indicate that Gray was not supported in his home town. Richardson, of Poplar Vale, Monaghan town, was a well known Conservative, although not an Orangeman. His father, John, had been a houseguest at Hilton Park during the first week-end in August when Shirley's campaign had been planned.¹⁸⁴ Sewallis Shirley was proposed by Sir George Forster of Coolderry House, and seconded by John Madden. It was important for Shirley, the new candidate, to be proposed by Forster, the previous

180 Northern Standard, 21 November, 1868, p 1.

181 Freeman's Journal, 24 November, 1868.

182 Northern Standard, 21 November, 1868, p 2.

183 Ibid, p 1.

184 Madden's Diary, 8 August, 1868. The Richardson family lived at Poplar Vale, one mile north of Monaghan town. John Richardson had been a Captain in the army, and in 1846 he was made High Sheriff for county Monaghan. He married Elizabeth, daughter of James Woodwright of Gola Scotstown, and secondly Frances Jackson of Lancaster. Edward was his eldest son. He had a daughter by his first wife.

holder of the seat, as this indicated that there was no rift within the Tory ranks. Madden, of course, was the major figure behind the campaign to have Shirley returned to Westminster. Gray was proposed by James Moyna of Monaghan and seconded by Peter McCabe of Ballybay. Both Moyna and McCabe were Catholics, and the choice of Moyna may have been an attempt to broaden Gray's appeal. The Northern Standard suggested that a proposer had to be found in Monaghan because there were not two suitable Gray supporters in the whole town of Ballybay. Gray was repeatedly groaned and hissed at by the crowd in the courthouse and described as 'no Protestant,' 'a bad Protestant,' and 'nothing to old Sam.'¹⁸⁵ He managed to speak, after Captain Madden quietened the crowd and he assured them that if he felt that his coming forward would lead to any riot or disorder that he would have refused the nomination. Polling was fixed for Monday 23 November, with polling booths in Monaghan, Castleblayney and Carrickmacross.

Even before polling commenced, it was felt that the Liberal candidate had little chance. He had not received the endorsement of the local bishop, an unusual event at such an important election. In addition, Donnelly was not even in the constituency at the time of the election.¹⁸⁶ On 17 November he left Monaghan for Dublin. On the way he met Rev Thomas Smollen and appointed him the Parish Priest of Clones. Thereupon he 'packed off Smollen to Enniskillen election.'¹⁸⁷ This indicates that Donnelly was neither apolitical nor opposed to clerical action at election time. He was very much in support of the candidature of the Liberal candidate for the town of Enniskillen which was also within the diocese of Clogher. John Collum had bought many properties and built a considerable number of houses in an attempt to wrest the representation of the borough away from the Erne family.¹⁸⁸ Gray did not receive such aid.

The result of an Irish election might often be decided by the activities of mobs on one side or the other. As the example of 1865 had

185 Northern Standard, 21 November, 1868, p 1.

186 Donnelly's Diary, 17 November, 1868.

187 Ibid.

188 Hanrahan, Irish Electioneering, p 78.

indicated, Monaghan was not immune to mob activity. Indeed, in the neighbouring county of Louth in that year the two Conservative candidates decided that it was inadvisable to even contest the constituency and they withdrew before the polling day. This was the ultimate in mob effectiveness. And if Monaghan's mobs could not expect just such stirring success, at least opposing voters could be acted against if not actively intimidated.

As the previous chapter indicated, Irish elections were lively affairs. A fair discussion of the activities which surrounded Irish elections is given by the veteran campaigner, A M Sullivan. Speaking of an election in county Longford in 1870, where both sides would have been composed of Catholics, he noted,

The county from end to end was a scene of disorder and conflict. The people, however, seemed to take it rather familiarly. Work was suspended. Blackthorns and shillelaghs were in request. Sticking-plaster was extensively worn. It was hazardous to walk the street or highway at night, as some patrolling party was sure to be encountered, who sang out, 'Greville?' or 'Martin?' If the wayfarer responded sympathetically all was well. If not, a scientific touch on the cranium laid him recumbent to study the pending political issue.

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Nor was the behaviour of mobs on either side of a political issue confined to the period between nomination and polling days. As the 1865 election in Monaghan had indicated, an armed mob was essential for the well-being of each sides' supporters. A contemporary Orange song gives an indication of the activities of the Orangemen on polling day during the 1868 election.¹⁹⁰

As there was no polling station in the west of the county, the Protestants of that section of the constituency had to travel to Monaghan town to cast their votes. At 8.00 am the Orangemen and Conservative supporters marched to the Clones train station and proceeded to Monaghan town. There they were met by the Monaghan contingent. The Dublin Evening Mail reported that Madden, presumably William, marched at the

189 A M Sullivan, New Ireland, p 334.

190 The folk song, collected in Ballybay, county Monaghan, indicates the value of oral history collection to orthodox historical studies. See McGimpsey, 'The Ignorant Historian,' in Ulster Local Studies, Vol IX, (1982), passim.

head of a body of 4,000 men. When they encountered the troops who had been drafted into the town for the election, they cheered 'No Dungannon here.' This was a reference to a recent riot in that town between a Protestant crowd and the RIC. Once the crowd entered the Diamond, Madden climbed the Dawson monument and requested that there should be no disorder.

But he continued,

It was not his wish, however, that they should take offence from anyone, and if there was bloodshed in Monaghan that day the priests¹⁹¹ had only themselves to thank for it. (Loud cheers).

The superior numbers of the Orangemen led to the dispersal of any opposing mob, and they were left free to escort the Conservative electors to the polls. It is unclear why the Liberal mob gave little opposition in the early part of the day. In 1865 the Conservative candidates had understandably decided not to contest county Louth, and the mob in that constituency was able to travel across to Monaghan. And whilst the election was not contested in Louth in 1868 either, the borough of Dundalk saw a contest and presumably the Liberal party helpers travelled there rather than into Monaghan. In any case, there was no trouble during the day.

After the polls closed the Orangemen and Conservative supporters made their way back to the train station. On the way they were attacked, and a considerable number of windows in the station was smashed.¹⁹² When the Clones contingent arrived in that town it was again attacked and a riot ensued.¹⁹³ The collision was something of a surprise as the polling had been reasonably trouble-free. Polling had not been to its usual standard. There were 5,591 electors in Monaghan. As it was a two seat constituency each voter had a total of two votes. In other words, a complete poll of the county would have produced a total vote of 11,182.

191 Dublin Evening Mail, 25 November, 1868, p 4.

192 London Times, 26 November, 1868, p 5.

193 John Madden's Diary, 24 November, 1868.

When the poll was announced on Wednesday 25 November, it was as follows:¹⁹⁴

Colonel Charles Powell Leslie	3,130
Sewallis Evelyn Shirley	2,785
William Gray	960

As it was only possible to use one vote for any candidate, Leslie's total indicates that he was supported by 3,130 voters. This would appear to be anomalous to the religious breakdown of the electoral register in Monaghan. It has been suggested that the Catholics had a slight majority upon the register. Not only has this view been put forward by modern scholars,¹⁹⁵ it was also the belief at the time.¹⁹⁶ And if the local press could assert, in the period prior to the introduction of the secret ballot, that the Catholic segment of the population had a slim majority upon the electoral rolls then there can be little reason to doubt such contemporary observers. Even if we were to assume that the Catholic majority was only one voter, then there were only 2,795 Protestants upon the register. That being the case, the difference between Leslie's total vote, 3,310 and 2,795 must be the number of Catholics who supported him. This being so, Leslie was able to attract 515 Catholic voters. This number might be ascribed to Leslie tenantry voting for their landlord, and it proves that at least in 1868 the Monaghan Catholics were unwilling to go against the directions of their Protestant landlords. No doubt this was because of the unacceptability of the Liberal candidate.

Shirley's vote does not, on the face of it, present us with the same problem of interpretation. It is less than the supposed number of Protestants upon the register. Gray's vote of 960 has been attributed entirely to Catholics polling for the Liberal against the Conservatives. It makes it certain that even if not one Protestant voted for Gray,

¹⁹⁴ Northern Standard, 28 November, 1868, p 1.

¹⁹⁵ Walker, Parliamentary Representation in Ulster, p 212.

¹⁹⁶ See ibid, p 124, n 96.

that only one-third of the Catholics of the county (34.33%) cast their votes for the Liberal.¹⁹⁷ The small turnout of Catholic electors to record their preference for William Gray indicates not only that he was personally unpopular, but also that without the public endorsement of the priests it was impossible for a Liberal to attract the Catholic electors to his cause.

This point was further underlined by the baronial voting figures. The Northern Standard gave them as:¹⁹⁸

<u>Barony of</u>	<u>LESLIE</u>	<u>SHIRLEY</u>	<u>GRAY</u>
Monaghan	766	577	342
Dartrey	605	541	77
Trough	409	309	77
Cremorne	761	650	277
Farney	505	643	128

The only areas where Gray did any way well were in the baronies of Monaghan and Cremorne. This was near his own area, the town of Ballybay in the barony of Cremorne, and the outlying districts which would have been in south Monaghan barony. In addition, his choice of James Moyna of Monaghan town indicated that he had at least some support among the Catholics of that area. Nevertheless, his disastrous showing in Trough which remained an area in 1883 where Presbyterian Liberalism was active, suggests that he had virtually no Catholic support in this barony. Dartrey, whilst being an area with a large Protestant population, and one where Protestant Liberalism was weak (the Protestants being usually Church of Ireland) was also an area where the Catholics would not support Gray. Perhaps this was because they remembered his father's exploits. But the real surprise in the regional voting pattern at this election was the strong showing of the Conservative candidates in Farney. Once again Gray did particularly badly, only recording 128 votes in this most Catholic of areas. Shirley's total of 643 must have included many Catholics simply on the grounds that there were not that many Protestant

¹⁹⁷ It is impossible to gauge the exact percentage of Catholics who voted Conservative. The Catholic majority must have been more than one. Thus, the figure of 34.33% is slightly generous.

¹⁹⁸ Northern Standard, 28 November, 1868, p 1.

votes in the area. Similarly, Leslie's total of 505 votes was astonishing. At the 1871 election caused by C P Leslie's death, his brother John received only 104 votes.¹⁹⁹ As the register had not altered between these two dates it can only be assumed that 104 was the number of Protestants in the area. This would make 400 Catholic votes for Leslie. And whilst this may well be conjecture, the fact remains that a significant number of Catholics must have voted for Leslie. In his speech seconding the resolution of thanks to the High Sheriff after the declaration of the poll in Monaghan, S E Shirly alluded with obvious pride to the fact that,

Farney can on this occasion bear so favourable a comparison with your more enlightened end of the county, and that more votes were polled for the Conservative cause in Carrickmacross, taking into consideration the numbers of voters on the registry, than in any²⁰⁰ other of the polling places in the county.

Shirley's speech also pointed out that he had been well received in every part of the county with the exception of Ballybay where he was given 'a somewhat stony-hearted reception.'

Leslie's speech commenced with his wondering why Gray had considered contesting the constituency when he had clearly no chance of victory. He also expressed his fear that the next session of parliament would be entirely taken up with the issue of disestablishment and disendowment of the Irish Church when there were more important matters to be decided. In particular, he mentioned the railways which he believed could only be properly run if they were nationalised. He also considered education to be an issue which demanded attention, although this time he offered no remedy.²⁰¹

The Liberals had lost the constituency of Monaghan which they had won in 1865. It was quite clear that a Liberal candidate would have no chance without the support of the local bishop. This was something which Gray could never receive due to his family's activities in the Ballybay area over almost half a century. The result also indicated that the Conservative landlords could still count upon the support of their Catholic tenants if the alternative was not entirely suitable. The question

199 Ibid, 22 July, 1871, p 1.

200 Ibid, 28 November, 1868, p 1.

201 Ibid.

was whether or not the Conservative candidates could hold their tenantry in the face of a popular candidate. Or, alternatively, whether the Liberals would henceforward recognise that their only real course of action was to include the Catholic Bishop of Clogher in the selection process.

But if the Conservatives were able to show a nett gain in Monaghan at the general election, they did not fare so well in Great Britain nor in the rest of Ireland. Of the 105 Irish Members of Parliament returned at the election, 66 were Liberals and 39 Conservatives.²⁰² This was a loss of eight seats. In fact, 12 seats changed hands. The Conservatives gained the second seat in the county of Monaghan, and in addition, Major L E Knox defeated Captain J W Flanagan in Sligo Borough.²⁰³ The Liberal gains were mostly in the south. They gained six county seats and four borough seats. The county seats were Cork, Waterford, Wexford, Kings, Queens and Sligo. The borough seats were Bandon and New Ross in the south and Newry and Belfast in Ulster. This meant that the picture described at the beginning of the chapter²⁰⁴ of Ulster being the seat of Ireland's Conservative party with a further concentration in Dublin and pockets elsewhere in the island, had changed in 1868. Ulster registered a loss of one seat over the Liberals; there were now 26 Ulster Tories. The position in Dublin remained the same with five of the six seats being in Conservative hands. The isolated Tory seats in the south of the island had almost disappeared.²⁰⁵ The sectionalism of Ireland's political party system was almost completed. Conservatism was becoming a sectional political philosophy, concentrated in the north of the island, and one which was identified with the Protestant religion. The advance of the Liberal party in Ireland, itself identified more and more with

202 These figures are agreed by both Walker in Parliamentary Representation of Ulster, and Craig, British Parliamentary Election Results. Thornley, Isaac Butt and Home Rule attributes 65 to the Liberals and 40 to the Tories. In addition, it should be remembered that William Johnston won Belfast as an Independent and Orange candidate over an orthodox Conservative, as did Marriott R Dalway in Carrickfergus.

203 On petition Knox was unseated and the borough was disfranchised. See H C 1870 (c 48) XXXII 621, Report of the Commissioners appointed for the purpose of making inquiry into the existence of corrupt practices at the last election for Sligo.

204 See above, pp 123-5.

205 Outside of Ulster and Dublin, Conservatives held the boroughs of Portarlington and Sligo, two seats in county Carlow, and one each in counties Clare, Leitrim, Mayo, Sligo and Wicklow.

the Catholics of the island, placed Monaghan not only on the geographic periphery of Ulster, but on its political periphery also. It was now the major bulwark of defence for the Protestant north.

CHAPTER IV

'The pale orange and mix hybrids
... I cannot understand'

The Butt By-Election 1871

Once the election was over and the Clones contingent had been seen onto the train, the Monaghan Orangemen and Conservatives returned to the centre of the town. One party entered Campbell's Hotel at the corner of Dublin Street. It was here that the Monaghan County Grand Lodge meetings were held, but it was a licensed premises frequented by both Protestants and Catholics. Amongst the Orangemen was young James Clarke of Corness. Clarke was a cousin of David Baird,¹ and had taken an active part in the activities on 13 July. Further, he had been prominent all day canvassing for the Conservative candidates.

That evening John McKenna, a Catholic from Emyvale, himself a participant in the July rioting, arrived at the door of the hotel. When informed that none of his party was there that night, he replied that 'The boy he wanted was there.'² He withdrew but subsequently returned around 11.00 pm. On entering the foyer of the hotel McKenna and Clarke came to blows, during which McKenna drew a pistol and said that, 'By God He would swing for them.'³ He then shot Clarke in the abdomen. Three members of the Twelfth Lancers who were staying at the hotel came down and arrested McKenna before he could effect his escape. He had hidden the pistol under a table but it was recovered and McKenna was

1 Discussion of both the July riot and the shooting of Clarke can be found in McGimpsey, 'Border Ballads and Sectarian Affrays.'

2 Dublin Evening Mail, 25 November, 1868, p 4.

3 McGimpsey, 'Border Ballads and Sectarian Affrays,' passim.

taken to jail.

There seems no doubt that James McKenna was a Fenian. He was from Emyvale which, like Tyholland, was renowned for its Fenian sympathies. Furthermore, McKenna had taken an active part in the proceedings of 13 July. He was involved in the attacks upon the Orangemen in the centre of the town, and he had been summoned by the RIC for having a club and stones in his hands during the riot. He was also summoned by John Clarke, James' brother, among others for having a pitchfork in his possession. McKenna, for his part, brought charges against one Orangeman for assault, and against another for discharging a loaded pistol. In addition, Sam Clarke swore that he saw 'Ruck' Smith and Daniel Foley point his son out to McKenna on the afternoon of the attack. There can thus be no doubt but that McKenna, like Hughes, was a member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood. His case was not to come to trial until March 1869 and it, like the riot cases, kept sectarian passions at fever pitch throughout the winter of 1868.

Notwithstanding the fact that the Liberal party was now in an unassailable position at Westminster with a majority over the Conservatives of 128, the attitudes of Ireland's Protestants did not alter.⁴ For some time they had believed that England's administrators were attempting to undermine their position. There was, they believed, a concerted effort on the part of successive English governments to break the power of the Protestant Ascendancy. This impression was strengthened in late 1868 when Thomas O'Hagan became the first Catholic Lord Chancellor of Ireland since the pre-Williamite period. O'Hagan's position was all the more difficult because he was a close friend of the head of the Catholic Church in Ireland, Cardinal Cullen. Cullen was complete anathema to the Protestants of the island. The Orangemen were in no doubt, and at their Grand Lodge meeting in December they stated that they saw the appointment, ". . . as virtually uniting, as of old, in one, the judicial and spiritual functions of the Papacy."⁵

4 The Liberals won 393 seats as against the Conservatives' 265; a majority of 128, the largest since the 1832 election. Ireland returned 65 Liberals and 40 Conservatives.

5 Grand Lodge Report, Dublin, 9-10 December, 1868, p 30.

There was an inherent implication in the Orangemen's resolution that they believed that there was a conscious policy on the part of the government to Catholicise the official positions of the state. And they appear to have been correct in this assumption. For example, Edward Spencer,⁶ the Lord Lieutenant, wrote to O'Hagan in February, 1869,

I heartily concur in the appointment of the 2 RC Magistrates whose standing and position seem [sic] very good. It will be well whenever an opportunity occurs to fill up vacancies by other RCs if they can be found. 7

One of O'Hagan's roles was to help the government in the Catholicisation of the executive and judiciary wings of administration in Ireland.

On 1 March, 1869, Gladstone introduced his Disestablishment Act. The feeling of betrayal by England, and of being threatened greatly increased. During the first half of the year the cause of the Irish Church was gradually being defeated at Westminster. The debates in the House were long and heated, but there was a realisation that eventually the measure would be voted upon and that those members who were pledged to disestablishment far outnumbered those who were opposed to it.⁸ The task was now to make the best possible terms.⁹ However, in the country at large the flicker of hope did not die out. Many of Ireland's Episcopalians believed that the Lords could stop the measure whilst others were assured that when it came to the bit, that the Queen would never

6 John Poyntz Spencer, 1835-1910. Fifth Earl Spencer, educated at Harrow and Trinity College, Cambridge. Liberal MP for Northampton North until made a peer in 1857. Lord Lieutenant for Ireland, 1869-1874, 1882-1885. In favour of Disestablishment of the Church, Home Rule for Ireland and Land Act of 1881. Invoked Coercion Acts after murder of Cavendish and lost credibility with Irish nationalists.

7 PRONI, 'O'Hagan Papers,' D2777/8/13, Spencer to O'Hagan, 17 February, 1869.

8 Ibid, D2777/8/20, O'Hagan to Spencer, 2 March, 1869, stated, "So far as I can judge, the measure will be highly popular, and the Speaker tells me he thinks it will pass, with comparative ease, through the House of Commons."

9 The Act would sever all legal ties with the Church of England, which continued to be established on the other island; Church property was confiscated and vested in a Temporalities Commission; the Maynooth Grant and the regium donum were cancelled; ecclesiastic courts ceased to function; Church of Ireland bishops lost their seats in the Lords and life positions were cancelled for Church officials. However, large sums of compensation were granted.

consent to the spoliation of part of the church of which she was the head. As it was these were vain hopes. The Queen was unwilling to see the two houses of parliament locked in direct conflict. Whilst the House of Lords contented itself with making a large number of amendments which did little more than make the measure slightly more palatable to the supporters of the Church of Ireland. And the bill was finally passed on its third reading in the upper house on 22 July. Four days later Queen Victoria signed the bill and it passed into law. The final retreat of the Lords' opposition was a surprise even to Gladstone who described them as 'almost inexplicable.'¹⁰ Perhaps the House of Lords recognised that the reform of the Church of Ireland could be followed by other reforming measures directed against other anachronisms in the British constitution.

While the Irish Church Bill was slowly moving towards fruition at Westminster, in Ireland itself the Protestants were not inactive. The Protestant Defence Association held numerous meetings throughout the country at which it was declared that disestablishment was not inevitable. In Monaghan the religious passions were kept close to the boil by the continuance of the McKenna and the Baird trials. Five days after Gladstone introduced his bill to disestablish the Church of Ireland, David and John Baird and John Clarke were all acquitted of the murder of Hughes.¹¹ However, if this was a victory for the Protestant interest in the county, they were not to find the Assizes to be completely to their liking. Two days after the Baird decision, the McKenna trial opened. The defence was conducted by Isaac Butt and Denis Caulfield Heron. On the opening day they called for the dismissal of the charges on the grounds of the influence of Orangeism upon the proceedings. Butt's argument rested upon three facts. First, that the Sheriff and Sub-Sheriff were both Orangemen; second, that the Orange Lodges had liberally subscribed to a fund to prosecute the case because Clarke had been an Orangeman; lastly, because the jury was framed in such a way as to preclude Catholics and thus prejudice the trial of the accused.

10 Akenson, Church of Ireland, 1800-1885, p 273.

11 Impartial Reporter, 11 March, 1869, p 4.

With regard to the first charge, the Orangemen of the county admitted that the Sub-Sheriff¹² was a member of the Orange Institution, but they strenuously denied that the Sheriff was also a member.¹³ Similarly, it was denied that the Orangemen of the county had subscribed to a fund to pay for a prosecution of the murderer of Clarke.¹⁴ The last charge was by far the most telling. Butt discovered that of the 1,207 names on the jury list, only 400 were Catholics. Further, the juries were generally composed from the first 70 names on the list and of these, 63 were Protestants.¹⁵

So as to decide upon Butt's charges two jurors were chosen from the panel. As luck would have it, both the jurors were Catholics; John Purcell Downs of Carrickmacross, and William McPhillips of Scotstown. McPhillips was an unfortunate choice because during the July riots of the previous year he had sworn an information against James Clarke. This naturally gave rise to claims on the part of the Protestants that the jurors chosen were biased. The government hoped that it would be able to act in the case without such a complexion being placed on its actions, and the Lord Lieutenant noted,

I fear the Monaghan business is not easy of completion; some new facts have appeared as to "the Triers" being R Catholics which

12 William Mitchell of Drumreask, Tullycroman, was a member of the Grand Committee of the County Lodge in 1857 and Deputy Treasurer from 1855-1864, when, upon the promotion of W W Madden to the County Master's chair, he became his Deputy County Master. His father, Henry Mitchell had been agent for the Shirley estate as well as Secretary to the Monaghan Grand Jury. When he died on 31 March, 1843 the people of Farney celebrated with a public holiday and lit bonfires on all the major hills.

13 Thomas Coote of Brandrum and later Raconnell House, Monaghan, was Sheriff of county Monaghan in 1868. He had been an Orangeman prior to the induction of many of the local gentry into the Institution in 1848. He was Deputy County Master from 1849 until 1855 when at the County meeting in April of that year he resigned, ". . . in consequence of his appointment in the Monaghan Militia." See Monaghan County Minutes, p 55.

14 The fund in question was to erect a headstone at the grave. There were also funds to defend parties from either side who might be indicted on charges arising out of the riots. Neither side raised money to prosecute members of the opposing party. See above, p 153.

15 London Times, 8, 9 March, and 8 July, 1869.

look awkward. This is unlucky, for we ought to have made our ground perfectly good before moving at all. . 16

Be that as it may, the triers found in favour of the petitioner and the panel was dismissed. This caused a considerable stir in the county. In defence Coote claimed that the percentage of Catholics upon the panel was roughly equivalent to the percentage eligible to serve. Also, he suggested that the absence of a direct rail link between Farney and Monaghan town decreased the availability of Catholics to attend the assizes.¹⁷ Furthermore, Coote impugned McPhillips' impartiality.¹⁸ The government had to act. Bishop Donnelly wrote a number of letters to O'Hagan demanding that strong action be taken against Coote and Mitchell.¹⁹ And as it was Mitchell who was responsible for the composition of the panel, Coote was ordered to remove his Sub-Sheriff from office. When Coote refused to comply with this demand he was dismissed along with Mitchell. The McKenna case was then transferred to Dundalk where a Catholic jury subsequently found him not guilty.²⁰ Butt reported that McKenna told him after his release that 'he hoped to die a Roman yet.' A large and enthusiastic crowd met McKenna's train when he returned to Monaghan town from Dundalk. A few days later he went with some cattle to Aughnacloy market but he was attacked by Orangemen and he had to return to Emyvale in the bottom of a cattle cart. The next day he left for America where he achieved his wish, being shot upon his arrival at New York.²¹

16 D2777/8/55, Spencer to O'Hagan, 19 June, 1868.

17 The correspondence between Coote and the Irish Chief Secretary, C P Fortescue was reprinted in the press. See Belfast Newsletter, 7 September, 1868, Impartial Reporter, 15 July, 1869, p 4.

18 D2777/8/58, Spencer to O'Hagan, 22 June, 1869.

19 Ibid, D2777/8/56, O'Hagan to Spencer, 21 June, 1869.

20 London Times, 8 July, 1869, p 10. The jury initially returned a verdict of not guilty to murder - justifiable homicide. Baron Deasey refused this verdict and the jury then gave a simple acquittal. TCD 1710/46, cutting, Dublin Daily Express, 9 July, 1869.

21 This folk account of the demise of McKenna was recorded in an interview with Henry Latimer, Cortubber, Cootehill. It was subsequently corroborated by Bob Montgomery, Church Square, Monaghan town.

The McKenna case like that of the Bairds kept party feeling running high. It had lasted from March when Gladstone first introduced his Disestablishment bill until July when it passed into law. Elsewhere in the island the first half of 1869 had seen religious difficulties remain at a high pitch. At the Dundalk election in January 1869 there had been considerable disorder. A rumour that a group of Orangemen was coming up from Dublin to act as agents for Sir F L McClintock, the Conservative candidate, had been met by an exhortation by one of Benjamin Whitworth's agents, a member of the Christian Brothers, for the people to butcher them and throw them into the Boyne.²²

In county Armagh, a group of Catholics travelling to a Eucharistic Conference in Dublin was attacked at Poyntzpass. In the south of the island the disturbed nature of the country led to an increase in agrarian crime, with the landlords and their agents the usual victims. In one instance a Parish Priest in county Longford reportedly threatened a local landlord named Blake. This led Spencer to write to O'Hagan asking him to put pressure upon any friends he might have among the bishops to see that such rhetoric stopped. This O'Hagan did, as both men recognised the necessity of Catholic passivity (especially in the north) at the present time.²³ Donnelly of Clogher replied that he would do his utmost to ensure that the Catholics in his diocese remained quiet. He instructed the clergy to speak against violent actions at Mass.²⁴

By early 1869 the reaction within the Protestant community was building up. The Dublin Evening Mail, the Conservative and Protestant newspaper for the southern half of the country started to print letters from Protestants who threatened the consequences if England was to 'despoil' the Irish Church. One writer warned Gladstone that, ". . . he dares to exercise might without justice, right or constitutional law to support it." He then continued that it had always been stated that the settlers in Ireland were more Irish than the Irish themselves and,

. . . it seems to me as if it were now about to receive its strangest and most portentous realisation by a universal demand from all Irishmen to England for Repeal of the Union - that they would 'let our people go,' and vex our souls no longer. 25

22 London Times, January, 1869, passim.

23 See D2777/8/22-28.

24 D2777/8/27, fragment of letter, O'Hagan to Spencer, undated but probably March-June, 1869.

25 Letter reprinted in Impartial Reporter, 25 March, 1869, p 2.

Another letter signed, 'A Landowner and magistrate for the County of Dublin, Residing in Wicklow' was in a similar vein, claiming that disestablishment repealed part of the Act of Union, and that if it could be repealed in part, then it could be repealed in toto.²⁶

This period, March to July, when the Church bill was being considered for the last time at Westminster was one of intense activity on behalf of the supporters of the Church of Ireland. From the end of March until the end of June major demonstrations were held in the Botanic Gardens, Belfast, Crossgar, Augher, Cookstown, Killyman, two in Omagh, Armagh, Enniskillen, Monaghan, Clones, Ballybay, Londonderry, Lurgan, Newtownards and three in Dublin. As well as these major meetings, there were numerous minor protests throughout the north. Occasionally an Orange function would be made the occasion of a demonstration of opposition to the measure as was the case in Omagh, Crossgar, and Ballybay where the opening of Orange Halls was utilised in this way, whereas the meetings at Monaghan and Clones were jointly to protest the action of the government towards the Church and jointly to remonstrate against the turn of events at the McKenna trial.

John Madden and his brother William took a prominent part in the Enniskillen PDA meeting.²⁷ William led a large body of Monaghan men to the meeting whilst John was entrusted with proposing the Third Resolution which condemned any form of levelling or of the apportioning of Church funds to the College at Maynooth. This was not a very important part of the proceedings, but by his speech Madden gained a lot of prominence. It indicates just how far he had already moved towards an anti-English stance by June 1869. He stated,

. . . if in violation of the Act of Union this infamous scheme of spoliation and robbery becomes law as I fear it will, and if the Popish College of Maynooth be endowed with the proceeds of the robbery, England will find herself without a single friend in Ireland, because she will lose the support of the Protestants, without gaining over the Roman Catholics (Hear, hear) . . . if this bill becomes law we will say to the Government and people of England - 'You have trampled under foot the Church of God and the

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ The meeting took place on 18 June, 1869 in Enniskillen although there was a large contingent from Monaghan. Although it was a PDA affair, there was a very large degree of Orange participation.

Protestant people of Ireland; you have violated the sacred compact made at the Union; the defender of the faith has betrayed the Church which she swore to protect.' We will have the union as it is or we will have none. (Cheers) . . . Depend upon it, as long as the laws are made for Ireland by a Parliament sitting in London, the rights, the wishes, and intentions of Irishmen will be treated with contempt. It is notorious that Englishmen, as a rule, hate Ireland, and will consent to anything to be rid of what they call an Irish row. It seems to me that the only safe course for us, therefore, is to demand a Repeal of the Union, and to commence forthwith a stringent agitation in favour of Repeal. (Cheers and cries of 'No Repeal'). I know it may be said that repeal would be followed by civil war. Very likely; but there have been civil wars in Ireland before now, and our fathers, though much fewer in numbers, than we are, held their own single handed against all comers. So can we. What we have done before, can be done again. (Hear, hear). We have the wealth, the intelligence, the energy, and the best blood of the country on our side, and we fear not the issue. The men of 1689 and 1690 are not all dead yet; and we are able, if needs be, to win back our rights with the edge of the sword. . . All we ask is for a fair field and no favour. (Loud Cheers) . . . I tell you fairly that I have but little confidence in the House of Lords or the Royal veto . . . After the English nation and the English Queen have cast us off to make our own way in the world, we must proceed to reform the Church and cast off the last remnants of Popery, which have survived the Reformation. We must have a closer union with the other branches of our great Protestant Church (Cheers).

28

Madden ended to the sound of loud and protracted cheering. The resolution was seconded by Colonel Edward Archdall.²⁹ He maintained that it was unjust to deprive the Protestants of Ireland of the property which they had held for three hundred years. However, he dissented from Madden's claim that they should become repealers, adding, "They could not unite with the Roman Catholics until they were freed from the trammels of Rome, and became freemen (Hear, hear). A Voice - Madden for ever. (Cheers).³⁰

28 Impartial Reporter, 24 June, 1869, p 3.

29 Edward Archdall was a member of one of the most prominent Protestant landowning families in the county of Fermanagh. Not to be confused with the Archdales, they were, nevertheless, equally active in Protestant politics in south Ulster. There was a long tradition of parliamentary activity on behalf of the family. Mervyn Archdall was MP for Fermanagh, 1801-2. He was succeeded by his son, Colonel Mervyn Archdall (Jun) who sat for the county until 1834 and was, in turn, followed by Captain M E Archdall.

30 Impartial Reporter, 24 June, 1869, p 3. Catholic papers in Ireland called for the removal from office of many participants who held common appointments, including the High Sheriff of Fermanagh county, see TCD, 1710/46, cuttings from Freeman's Journal.

Madden's speech suggests quite firmly that he had gone over to a form of nationalism very early. However, it is tempered with a strong undercurrent of anti-Catholicism. It is a view which was fairly prevalent among a select few in county Monaghan and elsewhere. Flanagan had spoken of chasing two snakes out of Ireland, England and Popery. But John Madden's call for Orangemen to become repealers was at least a step towards the later position which he was to maintain.

Meetings such as the one at which Madden spoke were sometimes called by the Protestant Defence Association, and sometimes they were quasi-Orange functions. Originally, when the PDA was founded there was a not insignificant degree of jealousy evident between it and the Orange Institution. Also, the PDA tended to be an upper-class organisation where the LOI was not. This failed to matter in the southern half of the island where Protestants were very few and all tended to be of the landed class, but in the north where there was a very large working and middle class, the aristocratic leadership of the new movement tended to alienate large numbers of working-class Orange dissenters to whom the episcopalians looked for encouragement. This antipathy between the classes in Protestant Ireland was not only based upon social grounds, but also upon internal pressures which had built up within the Orange movement during the previous decade.³¹ This had shown itself in a decided divergence between the episcopalian, landed and southern leadership of the Orange Institution, based in Dublin, and the wide reaching Orange democracy of Ulster. Many Orangemen had been active in the Ulster Tenant Right movement, and although usually responsive to the appeals of their leaders, from time to time, the hierarchy found itself maintaining control of Orangeism with extreme difficulty. The key issue around which the northerners had rallied was the repeal of the Party Processions Act of 1850. The Imperial Grand Master during this period was Lord Enniskillen who interpreted his role as being one of ensuring that the Institution kept within the law. He had a difficult task, not made any easier by frequent ill health.

The Party Processions Act controversy proved to be a constant irritant to the government. There was a growing belief within the administration's higher ranks that the measure should be repealed. Chichester

³¹ See above, pp 135-141.

Fortescue, the Irish Chief Secretary was opposed to the measure because of the problem of implementation. He wrote to Spencer on a number of occasions urging that the implementation of the act be suspended. Spencer, on the other hand, was opposed to any alteration in the position of parades for the time being. The Lord Lieutenant's support of the Act was based to a considerable extent upon the information which he was receiving from O'Hagan, who, in turn, was being prompted by many members of the Catholic hierarchy.³²

Johnston's forcing of the PPA issue both within the Orange Institution and on the streets of Ulster had been a result, to some extent, of a Catholic parade in Dublin to the site of the statue of Daniel O'Connell for the laying of the foundation stone in 1864 which had gone unpunished. Once again the government's inability to enforce the measure in the nation's capital exacerbated an already difficult problem. In 1869 there was a parade which removed O'Connell's remains from his grave to a large monument in another part of Glasnevin cemetery. The police report described the proceedings.

A procession was formed at the Circle at 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ am consisting of His Eminence Cardinal Cullen, 8 other Roman Catholic prelates and about 340 Catholic clergymen of the various orders, followed by the Lord Mayor and a number of the Dublin Municipal Council, as well as some other members of the other corporate towns, in all about 48. The Lord Chancellor and some of the judges were also present.

The proceedings at the Tower did not terminate until 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ pm. There was an immense assemblage of all classes and persons present, all of whom conducted themselves in a very orderly manner. I think the numbers cannot be less than 60,000. Not the slightest accident occurred. All passed off in a very satisfactory manner.³³

And whereas this parade possibly went outside the bounds of the law, the problem of enforcing it against such an assemblage would have been insurmountable. In any case, the continued implementation of the Party Processions Act further galled the Protestant minority which was still rocked by the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland.

³² See D2777/8/17-21. O'Hagan/Spencer correspondence.

³³ State Paper Office, Chief Secretary's Office, Registered Papers, CSORP 1869 7582.

The first half of 1869 saw a large degree of alienation from England within the Protestant community. The loss of confidence affected both the 'big house' and the weaver's cottage. The battle over disestablishment had unified the minority. The major unifying factor had been the concerted actions of two movements to defeat Disestablishment. These were the Protestant Defence Association and the inevitable Orange Institution. As already noted, the PDA denied that it had any connection with the Orangemen and they, for their part, were often less than enthusiastic about the new organisation. However, disunity was not advantageous to the cause. For example, when an attempt was made in 1869 to form an Independent Orange Association in the Ballymoney area of county Antrim, it was not a success. The Protestant population was not attracted to yet another loyal organisation, and the Grand Lodge of Ireland acted very quickly in expelling those Orangemen who had been attracted to the renegade body.³⁴

Similarly, the leaders of the PDA and the Orange Institution recognised that there was a need for, if not unity, at least some form of closer co-operation. For the Church's cause to have much chance of even limited success the aristocratic episcopalians had to demonstrate to the British that all Protestants were dismayed at the prospect of disestablishment. In other words, there had to be a visible and widespread support of the PDA, by the Orange democracy in the north. The benefits which Orangeism would receive were also significant. The aristocratic leadership of the Institution were at one with their counterparts in the PDA, but they had been alienated from their own members to an extent by the independent activities of Johnston and they were unable to exert themselves in a leadership role within the PDA. Consequently, if they could swing the Orange movement in the north behind the Church agitation they could not only reaffirm their position of leadership within the Orange movement, but they could also influence the actions of the PDA while at the same time aiding a cause which they saw as the defence of their very being.

³⁴ The manifesto of the Independent Orange Association was printed in the Times, 3 December, 1869, p 6. From their writings they would appear to have been Liberal leaning Orangemen who supported Gladstone's land policies and reform of the Church of Ireland. For Orange action against the IOA see, Grand Lodge Reports, Dublin, 8, 9, 10 December, 1868, p 26.

The most obvious method of achieving this goal was to organise protest meetings in the northern part of Ireland and hopefully attract large numbers of Dissenters. To achieve the aid of the Presbyterian clergy was not too difficult, and during the early part of 1869 a number of Presbyterian meetings against the proposed disestablishment of the Church of Ireland took place. The work of Rev Henry Cooke in forging an alliance between the two major Protestant groupings in Ireland is well known and this aided the effort to attract dissenting clerics; but to attract widespread enthusiasm from the ordinary dissenter was a different proposition. However, the achievement of this goal was relatively straightforward. All that was needed was for Johnston of Ballykilbeg to publicly and unequivocally indicate his support for the PDA. This was achieved in May, 1869, when, at the Botanic Gardens, Belfast, a rally attracted between 80,000 and 100,000 people.³⁵ It was recognised as a token of reconciliation between the Belfast Orangemen and the aristocratic Protestant Conservatives. At this rally Johnston pointed out that the repeal of Clause Five of the Act of Union was also tantamount to a repeal of the whole Act, and he added that a bill could be passed, but that it was a very different matter to impose a law.

Johnston's reading of the situation was very much in tune with the Orange movement in general. For example, at the county Monaghan Grand Lodge a resolution was passed which stated that the Orangemen viewed the bill to disestablish the Church of Ireland to be 'unjust, revolutionary and unconstitutional.' They declared that they would resist it by all means, to the death itself. They further stated,

That should such a base measure ever be adopted by the Legislature, we declare the Legislative union between Great Britain and Ireland thereby and thenceforward Repealed and Dissolved, and consequently we consider no Law afterwards passed by the Imperial Legislature in Westminster binding upon the inhabitants of Ireland and this we will maintain at all risks, and that liberty be requested from the Grand Lodge of Ireland to print and publish this resolution, the expense of which printing Br Flanagan undertook to defray. 36

The resolution had been proposed by Rev Flanagan and had been seconded by another cleric, Rev H Burdett.³⁷ The depth of resentment

³⁵ London Times, 25 May, 1869, p 9.

³⁶ Monaghan County Minutes, 20 May, 1869, p 147.

³⁷ Rev Henry Burdett, a prominent Church of Ireland clergyman in Ballybay and subsequently Newbliss. An active Orangeman, he was District Chaplain of Castleblayney and Ballybay District Lodges, and a Deputy County Grand Chaplain of Monaghan.

towards England over disestablishment was beginning to show, and it was a pointer of the way ahead in Monaghan.

By the time of the traditional parades, the demise of the Church of Ireland was settled. All that was required now was the royal assent. This was achieved between the Twelfth parades and those a month later to celebrate the Relief of Derry. It received the Queen's signature on 26 July. The event which had threatened to occur for some time was now, at last, an accomplished fact. The time had now arrived when the threats of Protestant Ireland would be put to the test.

At the annual bonfire at Portadown on 1 July the police attempted to disperse the crowds and in the ensuing trouble a young Protestant was shot dead. The Protestants felt that the government was attempting to provoke them into a conflict which would result in a total ban upon the Orange Institution. Presumably fearing the loyalty of the Protestant police, the administration followed the tactic of drafting in constabulary from the south and west of the island. The Orange men looked upon this as a provocation. For example, at an Orange meeting in Lurgan, 150 policemen from Kilkenny were present. This motivated William Madden to write to the papers to warn the Protestants not to fall for the government's ploy. After the inevitable attack upon the English government, he implored the Protestants of Ireland to bide their time because,

The Roman Catholics of Ireland cannot much longer be the dupes of the vampires who keep them degraded and impoverished in the face of the glorious reaction which has, and is even now taking place in Italy, Austria and Spain. The veil will be lifted from their eyes some day yet. You will have your innings; and it will be your duty and your privilege to keep the ball rolling till this old land is purged from the priests, Jesuits, infidels and blood-suckers who infest it and make foreigners imagine that the Irish are a nation of savages.

38

The violence at Portadown was not unexpected.³⁹ The seething disaffection within the Protestant community was bound to come to the

³⁸ Impartial Reporter, 8 July, 1869, p 3. See also TCD, 1710/46, Dublin Daily Express, 5 July, 1869.

³⁹ The London Times noted on 2 July, 1869, p 2, that unlike other years the pattern was one of Orange/Police violence rather than the more traditional Orange/Green.

surface. Wherever there were Protestant meetings, often at the opening of new Orange halls, the speakers pointed out that there could be no repeal of Clause Five of the Act of Union without a revocation of the entire act. In June the new hall at the Eight Tates was opened near Ballybay. At it Flanagan told his audience that if the church was disestablished then the Queen was guilty of perjury.⁴⁰ The north of Ireland was on the verge of a major outbreak of violence. Lord Spencer wrote to Thomas O'Hagan in mid June,

I shall be ready to come over, if there is the prospect of serious disturbances, but I sincerely trust this will not be the case.

Your influence will be useful in restraining the expression of the RC feeling in the North.

I hope they will see the wisdom of not showing their triumph and be content with the removal of the reproach which the Est Ch is to them.

If they keep quiet, and make allowances for the excitement of the Orangemen and Protestants, who no doubt in the North will be tried severely, one party can do no harm.

Have you written to any of the heads of your church in the North as to the prospects in July?

41

The authorities recognised that there was a strong possibility that Protestant disaffection would lead to violence. The problem was to contain that violence to an acceptable level. And to do this it was essential that the Catholics in Ulster especially did not appear too triumphant over the position of the Church of Ireland. It might be a long, hot summer, only time would tell.

The rhetoric of the speakers at various Orange and PDA meetings was decidedly virulent. England and its government was attacked in the strongest terms. In Dublin, for example, the government was warned that if there was another '48' that the Orangemen would fold their arms.⁴² Similarly, at Killyman outside Dungannon, county Tyrone, a speaker claimed that the Protestants of the island were being pushed towards a

⁴⁰ Ibid, 3 June, 1869, p 11.

⁴¹ D2777/8/55, Spencer to O'Hagan, 19 June, 1869.

⁴² London Times, 5 June, 1869, p 7.

civil war and that if they pursued their present policy they would be faced with another Derry and another Boyne.⁴³

In Monaghan there was a high level of Protestant activity. At the beginning of July a demonstration was held at Killeevan. They met on a hill near Flanagan's rectory; they then marched through the glebe lands,

. . . taking with them from the rectory a life sized effigy of Mr Gladstone, in whose hand was placed a roll of paper representing his bill for disestablishment and disendowment. While the processionists marched round the bonfires, the fifes and drums played the 'Rogues March' . . . the figure was then burned. 44

The evening ended with groans for Lord Cairns,⁴⁵ and 'especially the Jesuit Bishop of Oxford, - Soappy Sam.'⁴⁶ Similar events took place throughout the country on 12 July but with the exception of the shooting of the young Protestant at the bonfire in Portadown, there was no trouble. This was partly a result of a letter placed in all the major Protestant papers in south Ulster from W W Madden to the effect that the Protestants and Orangemen should keep within the law during the annual July celebrations.⁴⁷ In county Monaghan the Castleblayney and Ballybay Orangemen met at Ballybay where they marched to the glebe of Rev Henry Burdett, but they did not break the PPA and later dispersed. At Drum the Dartrey and Clones Orangemen assembled; once again, there was no trouble and the Clones contingent paraded back through Hilton demesne.⁴⁸

43 Ibid, 10 July, 1869, p 5.

44 Impartial Reporter, 8 July, 1869, p 3.

45 Hugh McCalmont Cairns, 1819-1885. Born in Belfast and educated at Trinity College Dublin where he received a BA in 1838. He was called to the bar in 1844. Elected Conservative MP for Belfast in 1852 and held seat until elevated to the peerage in 1867. Appointed to the woolsack in 1868 and again, 1874-1880. Had been chief opponent of the disestablishment bill but was seen to capitulate in July, 1869.

46 William Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford, a leader of the Ritualist movement of the Church of England, he gained notoriety during a controversy with Darwin's disciple, Huxley.

47 London Times, 8 July, 1869.

48 Madden's Diary, 12 July, 1869. No trouble was reported at Orange parades at Emyvale and Monaghan town.

Elsewhere there was a certain amount of trouble. In Belfast an Orange drumming party from the Shankill and lower Falls areas marched to Dunmurray where trouble with local Catholics started.⁴⁹ On the Shankill and Crumlin roads Protestant crowds became involved in confrontations with the police, whilst at Lisburn Derrynasur Chapel was fired at.⁵⁰ On the upper Falls road a Catholic crowd from the Pound district went on the rampage after a rumour was heard that Ardoyne chapel had been attacked by Protestants. This turned out to be untrue but there were collisions between two crowds on the sectarian divide between the Shankill and Falls roads. Outside of Belfast the police persuaded a Catholic crowd with 34 stands of arms at Innisrush in south county Derry to disperse, whilst the Orange hall in Newry was attacked and three people were wounded. In county Cavan Orange flags on church steeples in the Arva, Ballinagh, Killinkere and Killeshandra districts were seen as a challenge to the Catholic population. In Derry and Donegal counties attacks were made upon Orange parades at Desertmartin, Gulladuff and Muff's Glen.⁵¹

On 19 July John Madden decided that he would invite the Orangemen of south Ulster to Hilton Park to commemorate the 12 August.⁵² This anniversary had an added significance in the southern part of the province. On the same day as the siege of Derry was lifted in 1689, the Protestant forces at Enniskillen inflicted a major defeat upon King James' troops at the battle of Newtownbutler in south Fermanagh. Thus Derry Day was known in south Ulster as Enniskillen Day. However, so as to ensure that the demonstration would not interfere with the celebrations at Derry, it was decided to have the Hilton meeting on Saturday, 14 August.

At the annual parade in Derry on 12 August the Apprentice Boys did not carry the Union Jack.⁵³ Only the scarlet standard was evident and it must not have been lost to both communities that in fact this was the commemoration of a great victory by Irish Protestants over a tyrannical British king. Flanagan was on the platform and proposed a resolution to the effect that the Irish Protestants had been betrayed

49 PRONI, Chief Secretary's Office, Registered Papers for 1889, Mic 371/1, 12-16 July.

50 Ibid.

51 Ibid.

52 Madden's Diary, 19 July, 1869.

53 London Times, 14 August, 1869, p 10.

by England, and while they would be true to a Protestant sovereign, that they would henceforward work for the rights of Ireland which had been won at the Boyne. He also reminded the audience that the most distinguished Irish patriots before the union had been Protestants.⁵⁴

The Hilton Park demonstration was called for more than an annual commemoration of the battle of Newtownbutler. It had the added motive of indicating the displeasure of the Protestants of south Ulster at the removal of Coote from his position as High Sheriff, Mitchell from his position as Sub-Sheriff, the passage of the Church Act and the continued implementation of the Party Processions Act. Handbills which were distributed proclaiming the meeting stated that it was to consider 'various matters concerning the administration of justice under the present government, and to devise measures for ensuring the future safety and welfare of the Protestant Churches of Ireland.' The Irish North Western Railway, in which John Madden had a considerable interest, advertised that it would run special trains from Maguiresbridge via Lisnaskea, Cavan via Belturbet, and Castleblayney via Ballybay, Monaghan and Newbliss.⁵⁵ The Dublin Daily Express announced the demonstration and noted, ". . . we anticipate that the proceedings will be of more than ordinary interest." Whilst the Northern Standard stated that, ". . . since the Government is bent on heaping insult upon insult on the loyal Protestants of county Monaghan, they may yet learn to their grief, who they are and what stuff they are made of."⁵⁶

If the government feared that there might be trouble, so too did the Catholics of the county. On 11 August Rev Thomas Smollen, Parish

54 Impartial Reporter, 19 August, 1869, p 2.

55 Much of this information comes from the Resident Magistrates' reports sent to Dublin Castle and now available on microfilm Mic 371/1. Madden was a principle shareholder in the Irish North-western Railway company. Much material relating to the extension of the railway system into Monaghan, and south Ulster in general, can be found in the Madden documents deposited at Hilton Park. Much of which has recently found its way to the PRONI.

56 Northern Standard, 14 August, 1869, cited in ibid.

Priest of Clones, wrote to the Lord Lieutenant, Lord Spencer that he was of the opinion that more troops were needed in the area for the demonstration. He particularly mentioned a letter in the Belfast News-letter which spoke of a special train from Belfast, and he also indicated a fear on the part of the Catholics of the county that the ships' carpenters from the Queen's Island would be coming. Smollen wrote a second letter a few days later this time enclosing a copy of the handbill announcing the demonstration, and he requested that more troops be sent to Clones to protect the Catholics. He finished, "From the very determined course pursued by Your Excellency towards this county of Monaghan for the past few months, I feel confident as every Catholic does, that the Government is prepared to extend protection where necessary to Her Majesty's Catholic Subjects."⁵⁷ In any case, the government were taking no chances and they ordered a Squadron of the Eighth Hussars, a Company of the Seventeenth Regiment of Foot and a force of Royal Irish Constabulary to Clones in case of disturbances.⁵⁸ The Orangemen marched from their assembly points to Hilton and with the exception of a very small collision at Ballybay where a number of women jeered a lodge as it marched through the town, there was no trouble.

The press reported that between 25,000 and 30,000 people attended the Hilton meeting, including 140 lodges.⁵⁹ John Madden himself estimated that there were 40,000 to 50,000 present.⁶⁰ The chair of the meeting was taken by John Madden, his brother William acting as secretary. Apologies were received from the county's two Members of Parliament, Leslie and Shirley, and from Lords Enniskillen and Crichton, and Sir James Stronge of Tynan Abbey.⁶¹ Each correspondent indicated his support for the proceedings with the exception of one from Edward Archdall which stated that he disagreed with the meeting. He claimed that as the Church of Ireland had now been disestablished the Protestants should

57 Ibid.

58 London Times, 14 August, 1869, p 10.

59 London Times, 16 August, 1869, p 4, gave a figure of 20,000 as the attendance. The Impartial Reporter, 19 August, gave 25,000-30,000.

60 Madden's Diary, 14 August, 1869.

61 Impartial Reporter, 19 August, 1869, p 2.

accept the measure. John Madden, in his role as chairman contrasted the conduct of the government over the Baird and McKenna cases. In Baird's case he had been remanded in custody by means of a dubious coroner warrant. McKenna had had his case transferred to Dundalk where he was released. Madden claimed that the conduct of the government indicated that there was a law for the Protestants and a different one for the Catholics. This point was underlined by the fact that the Catholic RIC inspector who was in charge of the police at Portadown when the Protestant youth was shot, Inspector Nunan, had also had his case moved from Portadown to Dundalk.⁶²

The London Times noted that, "It might be supposed that they had given full vent to their indignation but the removal of the sheriff has reopened old wounds."⁶³ But as Madden's speech indicated, national issues were not dead while there were local ones to exacerbate them. Having discussed the legal actions which surrounded the sectarian cases in Monaghan, he denounced the government which was willing in the past to rely upon the Orangemen when it needed them but now attacked them. Madden also claimed that the Party Processions Act could not be broken on private land, but the firing of guns during the parade through Hilton did in fact break the Act. He then moved on to a discussion of the Coote affair and the affront that the action was to the Protestants of county Monaghan.

Madden's discussion of the Coote affair was a perfect opening for the second speaker, Rev Woodright⁶⁴, who proposed a motion that the attempt of the government to force Coote to place people upon the jury because of their religious beliefs, and his dismissal for refusing to do so, was 'illegal and unconstitutional and an assault upon public liberty.' This resolution was seconded by George Knight, a solicitor in Clones, and the County Secretary of the Monaghan Grand Lodge. There next followed a resolution of sympathy to Coote, proposed by John Madden of Rosslea Manor, the head of a lateral branch of the family, and this was seconded by W W Madden. William also spoke of the Party Processions Actions before returning to a theme which he had been expounding at

⁶² Standard, 9 July, 1869, in TCD, 1710/46, cuttings.

⁶³ London Times, 17 August, 1869, p 4.

⁶⁴ He was a Church of Ireland clergyman and a member of a prominent county family, the Woodrights of Gola House, Scotstown. He does not appear to have been an Orangeman.

loyalist meetings throughout Ireland over the last six months. This was that there was nothing wrong with the Catholic population of the island. The antipathy between the two creeds was not because the Orangemen had changed, he claimed. He reminded his audience that Catholics used to attend functions which were held under the auspices of the Orange lodge, and that most of the fifiers at the Twelfth parades used to be Catholics. This change on the part of the Catholics had come about under pressure from the priests. He added that threatening notices which had been received were sent by the Ribbonmen and not by the Fenians. He continued,

A Fenian, I am told, does not confess to a priest unless the priest is a Fenian too; but a Ribbonman takes a pot-shot at a man from behind a hedge, and then goes and tells it all to his priest, who at once gives him absolution. Therefore, I say again if an Orangeman falls somebody else ought to tumble after him. 65

Once again William Madden differentiated between the Catholic and the priest. Here there is a new twist also. The Ribbonman is portrayed as a Catholic working in hand with his church, whilst the Fenian is not so closely identified with the church and thus more acceptable to the Orangeman.

Finally the meeting turned its attention to the question of the Church. Flanagan said it was a breach of faith, and that it was a ". . . virtual severance of all ties of affection and interest which have hitherto bound us to the Crown and Government of England."⁶⁶ Rev G Burnside DD,⁶⁷ went so far as to suggest that, "they would go in for an Orange Free Church all over the world (Cheers) - a Free Orange Church, with Orange prelates, Orange ministers and have all their communion tables decorated with Orange. (Loud applause). A Voice - Bravo, and no Ritualism (Cheers)."⁶⁸ The meeting broke up without incident. Rev

⁶⁵ Impartial Reporter, 19 August, 1869, p 2. Times, 17 August, 1869, p 4.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Church of Ireland minister from Castleblaney; Deputy County Grand Chaplain of the Monaghan Orangemen.

⁶⁸ Impartial Reporter, 19 August, 1869, p 2.

Smollen wrote a letter of thanks to Earl Spencer stating that the presence of the troops had ensured no breach of the peace.

The Hilton meeting was clearly designed to appeal to as large a cross-section of the Protestant population of the county as possible. The denouncement of the Church Act would gain the support of the episcopalians who made up the great bulk of the population of Fermanagh and Monaghan Protestants. The removal of Captain Coote was an attack upon the Protestant position in the county and had been resented by episcopalian and dissenter alike. The attack upon the Party Processions Act was the keynote of the Orange campaign. Naturally as these categories overlapped, there was a large measure of agreement between all sections of the community.

The fears of Rev Smollen that there would be widespread violence inflicted upon the Catholic population of Clones proved to be groundless. He subsequently wrote to Lord Spencer to the effect that it was only the Lord Lieutenant's stringent measures in sending so many troops to Clones that had saved the Catholic population.⁶⁹ Spencer's detail of a squadron of Eighth Hussars, a company of Seventeenth Foot and a number of RIC did not altogether eradicate violence. As the Orangemen were leaving they were followed by a large number of Catholics. A collision occurred and a labourer by the name of William Henderson died from a wound received by a blunt instrument.⁷⁰

The issue of the Party Processions Act re-emerged in October 1869. The parades through Dublin in 1864 had inflamed passions in the north. Now, in October, 1869, the Amnesty Association decided to have a march through the streets to demand amnesty for the Fenian prisoners. Such a parade would undoubtedly be illegal. John Madden decided that it was time to test the resolve of the English administration with regard to the PPA. Consequently, he went to Dublin and presented an affidavit in the Southern Division Police Court to the effect that he had information that the PPA would be broken at the Amnesty Association to be held the following day. He pointed out that Section Two of the Party

⁶⁹ PRONI, Mic 371/1.

⁷⁰ Return of Outrages reported to the Constabulary Office in Ireland during the year 1869, with summaries for preceeding years, HC 1870 (C 60) LVII, 353.

Processions Act stated that not only should Resident Magistrates stop parades, but that justices of the peace should understand that it was their duty thus vested in them by the law, and that if they failed to do so, they would be held both collectively and individually responsible. Madden argued that as a JP it was his duty to inform the government of the impending breach of the law. On Thursday, 7 October, he had written to the Chief Secretary about the Fenian preparations in Dublin.⁷¹ And the unwillingness which the RM at the Dublin Court showed towards Madden's sworn information coupled with the fact that the Under Secretary took no action over his letter suggests just how embarrassed the Government were over the whole affair. The authorities issued a proclamation about the meeting, but it specifically did not mention party processions.⁷² The meeting was held at Cabra on the north side of Dublin, and Madden "attended it disguised as a Fenian in green &c &c."⁷³

Madden's involvement in the Amnesty controversy thrust him into the limelight. He wrote a number of letters on the subject to the Irish and British newspapers. The whole affair acted as a catalyst both upon his own nationalist proclivities, but because of his close relationship with Monaghan Orangeism through his brother, and his official position as a Commissioner of the Peace for the counties Monaghan and Leitrim, the Deputy Lieutenant of both Monaghan and Fermanagh, and a Justice of the Peace for Monaghan, Fermanagh, Leitrim and Cavan, also upon the Protestant aristocracy in south Ulster. The Protestant leadership in the south of the province had gradually swung further and further towards a nationalist position and the foremost in this transition was John Madden.

While John Madden was haranguing the government for standing idly by while the disloyal paraded the streets in contempt of the law and at the same time 'despoiling' the church of the loyal segment of the population, his brother William had not remained quiet. During the

71 Madden's Diary, 7 October, 1869.

72 Impartial Reporter, 14 October, 1869, p 4.

73 Madden's Diary, 10 October, 1869.

campaign against the Church Act, William Wolseloy Madden had been brought into close contact with Johnston of Ballykilbeg whose chagrin at the disestablishment of the church had led him to call for an independent political party to speak for Ireland's Protestants. Early in November, at a meeting in Dublin, he had called for, "an independent Orange and Protestant party." Captain Madden and William Verner, a Dublin Orangeman had also spoken at this meeting in a similar vein.⁷⁴ On the surface it appeared as if the threatened rejection of England by Ireland's Protestant society was already underway.

Towards the end of 1869 Charles Moore the eminent Catholic member of parliament for Tipperary, died. Originally the nomination was offered to Isaac Butt, the President of the Amnesty Association, and also head of the recently formed Irish Tenant League.⁷⁵ However, Butt refused the honour and endorsed the candidature of his friend Denis Caulfield Heron who addressed the electors in favour of amnesty, denominational education and fixity of tenure. The opposition to Heron came from an unexpected quarter. The advanced nationalists put forward Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, a Fenian who was incarcerated in Pentonville Gaol and whose case had received much publicity due to the severe treatment he had been subjected to. In a low poll Rossa was elected.

The reaction of the Protestant party to this result is interesting in so far as it was not that which would have been the expected response a few years earlier. At the meeting of the County Grand Lodge of Monaghan held in Monaghan town on 30 November, 1869, two important resolutions were passed. One expressed gratitude to John Madden,

. . . for the manly and straightforward manner in which he acted upon the occasion of the recent party procession in Dublin, and we look upon his uncompromising and spirited line of action, as most important, inasmuch as it is calculated to force the miserable Government now in power, either to carry out the law, bad as it is, impartially, or to confess that the favour of the Irish Executive

⁷⁴ Times, 9 November, 1869, p 7.

⁷⁵ For an account of the events in Ireland during 1879 see Thornley, Isaac Butt and Home Rule, Chs I and II. Also Lawrence J McCaffrey, 'Irish Federalism in the 1870s: A Study in Conservative Nationalism,' in Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, (Philadelphia, 1962), new series, Vol LII, Part 6.

is reserved only for the disloyal of the land: the agents of Cardinal Cullen.⁷⁶

This resolution along with another was then submitted to the Grand Lodge and permission was requested to have them both printed as an appendix to the report of the Grand Lodge proceedings in December. The fact that this desire was acceded to suggests that the body of the Grand Lodge was in sympathy with the resolutions of the Monaghan Orangemen. Rev Flanagan who had proposed the above resolution from his friend was to second an even more important resolution which had been put forward by William Madden; in the Grand Lodge Reports the second resolution is reproduced as follows,

. . . that although we utterly disclaim any sympathy with the Fenian Society, or its objectives, that the best thanks of this County Lodge are due, and hereby given to the Gentlemen and Conservative electors of Tipperary, in standing aloof on the recent election, and allowing the Fenians and other opponents of the Government to scout the Government candidate, and assert their right to return the man of their choice, thereby expressing their disgust at the general conduct of their rulers, and the failure of concession to the disloyal of the land in bringing about peace in Ireland.⁷⁷

Once again, the fact that this resolution was permitted to appear as an appendix to the Grand Lodge Report suggests that there was a basic concurrence on the part of the Grand Lodge with the Monaghan County Lodge. However, this second resolution as printed in the Report of Grand Lodge was not the same resolution passed by the Monaghan Orangemen. Their initial wording had been just as above, but it had then continued,

We regard this action as marking a new era in the history of Ireland thereby showing that Irishmen will no longer be made tools of by an Alien Government, who have gone out of their way to insult Irishmen of all political shades of opinion.

'Let Erin remember the days of old
Ere her faithless sons betrayed her,
When Malachi wore the collar of gold
Which he won from the proud invader.
When our fathers with banners of blue unfurled
Led the Red Branch Knights to danger,
Ere the emerald gem of the Western World
Was set in the Crown of the Stranger.'

And that our Grand Secretary be directed to publish the above in

⁷⁶ County Minutes, 30 November, 1869, pp 153-154, also Grand Lodge Reports, Dublin, 8-10 December, 1869, p 34.

⁷⁷ Grand Lodge Reports, Dublin, 8-10 December, 1869, p 34.

the leading public journals.⁷⁸

The publication of the two resolutions by the Grand Lodge indicates a move towards a more nationalist stance by Ireland's Orangemen, the original wording of the second resolution as contained in the Monaghan county Minutes suggests that the Orangemen of that county had moved somewhat further than had the Institution on a national level. W W Madden's utterances indicate that he, in turn, had advanced further towards a nationalist position than had even the members of his county lodge. However, his career within the Orange movement clearly demonstrates that he was not a man in an entrenched and unrepresentative position whose utterances are all but irrelevant to the study of the Orange Institution at this time as a whole. He was a popular Orangeman, and the fact that he was elected to so many high offices within the county and national movement suggests the high level of esteem in which he was held.⁷⁹

William Madden gave a fuller exposition of his views the week after the county meeting when he was asked to address the members of the Duke of York Orange Lodge in the Molesworth Hall. The Belfast MP stated his belief that if the Government was to find itself in a position of confrontation with the Fenians then it was not the duty of the Orangemen to aid either side but they should, ". . . tell the English government and the English people that if there is to be a fight or an attempt to set up a Fenian Republic, the Orangemen will stand aside, and will protect themselves, maintain the Protestant religion, and protect their homes and their hearths, and let the English Government and the Fenians fight it out between them."⁸⁰

⁷⁸ County Minutes, 30 November, 1869, pp 153-154.

⁷⁹ Madden had been Worshipful Master of his own lodge, LOL 584 since at least 1866. He was a member of the Grand Committee of the County Grand Lodge of Monaghan from 1860 until his death in 1874. He was also a member of the Central Committee from 1863. He held the position of Deputy Grand Master of the county from 1864 until August 1869 when he was elected County Grand Master upon the death of H G Johnston, the incumbent. Outside of his county he was on the Grand Committee of the Grand Lodge of Ireland, 1862-1874, and he was made a Deputy Grand Master of Ireland in 1863. The degree of elective responsibility which W W Madden enjoyed indicates his high standing within the Orange Institution. When it is borne in mind that he was incarcerated for a year, and in Canada the following year and was retained in these positions, his personal popularity is further underlined.

⁸⁰ Times, 9 December, 1869, p 5.

These sentiments were re-echoed by William Madden who applauded the Tipperary result saying that if he had had a vote then he would have voted for Rossa, and finally he expressed his hope that Luby would also be victorious.⁸¹ Madden then told the assembly that they had nothing to fear from the Fenians who were not assassins like the Ribandmen, for they would not be trimming their green rosettes with orange if they meant the Protestants any harm. He then went further than might be expected. He finished his speech with the words,

The Habeas Corpus Act is again suspended, and the screw clamped on tighter than ever, Another message of peace, in the shape of a Land Bill, will shortly appear. Then follow more soldiers, more police and more taxes, and the wounds of Ireland will be healed by another bloody revolution, to the tune of 'No Surrender.'⁸²

Both speeches were well received by the Orangemen and so important were they viewed in England that the Times devoted a long editorial to the views of both Johnston and Madden. That of the latter seems to suggest an orange uprising perhaps with Fenian support.

The Grand Lodge meeting in Dublin in December 1869, created a considerable stir. It was at this meeting that the Orange leaders almost expunged from the rules of the Institution the principle that Orangemen be bound to uphold the Union. The prime mover behind this attempt was John Nunn, a prominent Dublin Orangeman. His proposal was seconded by Sir George Forster, Bart, of Carrickmacross, but it was decided to postpone the matter and instead a Special Grand Lodge was arranged for the period of the Church Convention when a decision could be made. The matter was again permitted to remain undecided until the Grand Lodge at the beginning of 1871, at which time John Flanagan again made the proposal that Orangemen be no longer bound to the Union.⁸³

⁸¹ Thomas Clarke Luby, 1822-1901, had been involved with James Stephens at the very start of the Fenian movement. He was later associated with Rossa on the staff of the Irish People and was arrested and sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. In December 1869, Gladstone raised Colonel Fulke Greville-Nugent to the peerage. This left a vacancy in parliament for county Longford. It was originally suggested by the advanced nationalists that Luby contest the seat, but the nomination eventually went to John Martin.

⁸² Times, 9 December, 1869, p 5.

⁸³ The Orange reaction to disestablishment and the moves to break the loyalty requirement to the British crown can be followed in Grand Lodge Reports, 1868-1872.

Although Nunn's proposal was defeated, it indicated the depth of resentment felt by the southern Episcopalians over the disestablishment of their church. This alienation was helped by the first of Gladstone's Land Bills which was at that time passing through Westminster. As John Madden's brother, Charles, pointed out,

I see the Church Bill is passe & become law - I was afraid the Queen and the Lords were helpless - The worst I fear is to come - the Land Bill - I mean - & that is what the priests are driving at - They know well the gentry are their worst opponents & unless they get them bound down & the tenants made masters - their power will decline every day as emigration goes on - 84

Thus the Land Act was seen as a sectarian issue, in that the English were again attempting to erase the power of the Protestant Ascendancy. And as each blow fell, the Protestants, especially the landowners and the members of the Church of Ireland, were further alienated from England.

This alienation would take a swifter course in December, especially in county Monaghan, with a further conflict between John Madden and the authorities. On 25 November, Madden received a letter from T H Burke, the Under Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, informing him that he had been selected to become the new High Sheriff of the county of Leitrim. Madden, still very disgruntled at the actions of the government, wrote back in reply that he wished to enter his, ". . . formal protest against being called upon to serve under the present Administration."⁸⁵ The letter continued with a tirade against Gladstone's government. On 8 December Madden went by train to Belfast to attend the Great Protestant Meeting which was arranged for the following evening in the Ulster Hall. His Diary does not make it clear whether he then returned to Hilton, but on 17 December he left for Derry on the noon train. The entry for the following day reads, "Shutting of the Gates of Derry - march at head of the procession all day."⁸⁶ This suggests that his popularity within

84 Madden Documents, Hilton Park, Clones, Letter from Charles Dudley Ryder Madden to his mother, Sydney Anne Madden, 21 August, 1869.

85 Copies of this correspondence is available in Hansard, Vol CC, (Third Series), 1870, pp 908-930. It also appeared in a printed form in a pamphlet or legal publication under the title, In the Matter of the Dismissal of JOHN MADDEN OF HILTON PARK.

86 Madden's Diary, 18 December, 1869.

Protestant circles had already spread outside the confines of south Ulster.

Madden returned to Clones on 20 December. Two days later Madden received the following letter from Chichester Fortescue, the Chief Secretary, informing him that the offer had been withdrawn and also that,

His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant has, under the power vested in the Lord Lieutenant . . . signified to the Lieutenant of the County of Monaghan his pleasure that you should be removed from the office of Deputy Lieutenant of that county, and has requested the Lord Chancellor to consider the propriety of retaining your name in the Commission of the Peace. 87

Madden replied on Christmas Eve that he was glad that the government had decided not to burden him with the 'doubtful honour' of having to serve as High Sheriff of county Leitrim.⁸⁸ He further stated that it was a matter of complete indifference to him what course either the Lord Lieutenant or the Lord Chancellor should adopt in the matter because,

I have the satisfaction of feeling that while I held the Commission of the Peace (a period of now upwards of twelve years) I executed the trust reposed in me honestly and faithfully, and therefore my dismissal will not cause me any feeling of regret . . . I may tell you that long since when I read the incendiary harangues delivered by different members of the Cabinet, I considered myself practically turned out of the Commission of the Peace, for it would be quite useless for me, a private individual, to attempt to carry on the farce of keeping order under such circumstances and I have invariably refused to act as a Magistrate under the present Government in the consequence. 89

On 22 December, the same day as Fortescue had written to Madden informing him that he would be approaching the Lord Chancellor with regard to Madden's Commissions of the Peace, Charles Teeling, the Chancellor's Secretary, wrote a letter to Madden in which he stated that anyone who 'scoffs at the honour' of serving the Queen was not worthy of holding the position of Justice of the Peace, and that consequently the Lord Chancellor had decided to remove him from these positions.⁹⁰

87 Dismissal of JOHN MADDEN, p 2.

88 Ibid, p 4.

89 Ibid.

90 D2777/8/92 Charles H Teeling to Madden, 22 December, 1869.

O'Hagan's haste at removing Madden's Commissions of the Peace was commended by Spencer. On 23 December he wrote to the Lord Chancellor expressing the view that his letter to Madden had been excellent.⁹¹ The government had been seen to act swiftly with recalcitrant members of the Protestant Ascendancy, and this augured well for the relationship between Gladstone and the Catholic hierarchy. However, it placed it in a difficulty due to the considerable discussion which was then taking place as to the utterances of various priests which were thought to be seditious. The printed Dismissal of JOHN MADDEN, for example, reproduced newspaper reports of a meeting chaired by Earl of Granard KP, a Magistrate for county Leitrim, in Carrick-on-Shannon where a local priest was reported to have stated that the landlords should be shot like mad dogs.⁹² Whilst the correspondence between Spencer and O'Hagan during the last weeks of 1869 was mostly about how the Lord Chancellor could stop the utterances of a number of over-zealous Catholic clergymen.⁹³

The rescinding of Madden's public offices by the administration had a profound effect upon the Protestant population in the border counties of Ulster.⁹⁴ On 3 January a correspondent to the Dublin Daily Express wrote to that paper suggesting that a testimonial be started for Madden and that they "tender our congratulations on the distinguished honour conferred upon him by the government."⁹⁵ This was followed by a similar letter from a friend of Madden's, William Humphreys JP, of Ballyhaise House, county Cavan. Numerous other letters were sent to the press by members of the Protestant landowning class in favour of Madden.⁹⁶ In Lurgan the local PDA had a meeting in sympathy with him, whilst the Orangemen of Monaghan held a demonstration in his favour at Hilton Park. At this demonstration John Madden said,

91 Ibid, D2777/8/93, Spencer to O'Hagan, 23 December, 1869.

92 See Dismissal of JOHN MADDEN, p 4.

93 D2777/8/94, 95, and 96.

94 The Madden affair became the cause celebre of the Conservative press. And apart from the editorials, the letters columns carried numerous indications of support for his position.

95 TCD, 1710/47.

96 See ibid, for reports of meetings of support and letters of support.

I believe . . . that we shall be called upon, and the sooner the better, to reinstate our Protestant Constitution, the chief cornerstone of which has been loosened, but not displaced, by the passing of the Irish Church Act. Nothing will satisfy the hierarchy of the Church of Rome but complete and absolute ascendancy, and the destruction of everything Protestant. . . . The Irish Church Act has severed forever all the old ties which bound us to England, and now we can only recognise Irishmen no matter what their religious or political opinions, as struggling for their rights and liberties against an apostate and time-serving nation.

97

Madden's rhetoric indicates that he had moved very near to a nationalist position. The alienation which he felt from Ireland's administrators was almost complete. And whereas his personal grievance with the British government would increase this antipathy, the fact that he received such whole-hearted support from other Protestant JPs and holders of other government appointments suggests that they, too, were close to their breaking points. Lord Claud Hamilton,⁹⁸ for example, wrote to Sir Thomas Larcom⁹⁹ to the effect that whilst Madden was wrong to write to the Chief Secretary in the tone he adopted, he could not see how he could be called to account for it.¹⁰⁰ In reply, Larcom stated that he was of the opinion that Madden and Fortescue were equally in the wrong.¹⁰¹

At the end of January, Lord Erne, the Lord Lieutenant of county Fermanagh convened a meeting of the magistrates of that county to consider the Madden case, and a petition was circulated in his favour which

97 London Times, 12 January, 1870, p 10.

98 Sir Thomas Larcom, 1801-79, a soldier and civil servant, he worked on the Ordnance Survey of England (1824-26), and was director of the Irish Ordnance Survey (1828-45). He was Census Commissioner in 1841, a commissioner of Colleges in 1845, commissioner of Public Works, 1846-9, and assisted on the commission investigating reform of Dublin Corporation in 1849. He was Deputy Chairman of the Board of Works from 1850 until his appointment as Irish Under Secretary in 1853. He retired in 1868.

99 Sir Thomas Larcom, 1801-1879. Educated at Royal Military Academy, Woolwich. After working on the Ordnance Survey in England, 1824-1826, he became director of the Irish Ordnance Survey, 1828-1845. Census Commission 1841, Commissioner on Colleges 1845, Commissioner on Public Works 1846-1849, Deputy Chairman Board of Works 1850-1853. He was made Under-Secretary in Dublin Castle, a position he held for many years.

100 TCD, 1710/47, Hamilton to Larcom, 26 January, 1870.

101 Ibid, Larcom to Hamilton, 29 January, 1870.

attracted the signatures of 36 magistrates and Deputy Lieutenants including Lords Enniskillen, Lanesborough, Cole and Crichton. The Freeman's Journal challenged the signatories to expose themselves to the same danger as had Madden.¹⁰² Nevertheless, the example of county Fermanagh was shortly followed by county Monaghan, where a similar petition received the signatures of 24 magistrates, including the Members of Parliament, Charles Powell Leslie who was also Lord Lieutenant of Monaghan in 1870, and Sewallis E Shirley, as well as that of the former representative, Sir George Forster.¹⁰³ The county Leitrim Grand Jury passed a resolution of sympathy.¹⁰⁴ Whilst the Monaghan PDA organised a protest tea in support of Madden which attracted over 1,000 people.

Although the Monaghan controversy made greater headlines, elsewhere Protestant disaffection was increasing, especially in the nation's capital. January 1869 had seen the Conservative members of the Dublin Corporation propose that a statue of Henry Grattan be erected in the centre of the city, and by 1 January 1870 they had progressed still further. Mr Erson, an Orangeman and a member of the Poor Law Board, proposed a motion in favour of repeal and it was seconded by another orange Tory, Alderman Manning. The Corporation was to see the peculiar sight of 'national' issues being raised and supported by the Conservatives and the Repealers whilst the Liberal members proved to be the opposition. This was simply a period of realignment which Irish politics underwent during the first half of 1870. The Liberals had assumed the position of spokesmen for Ireland, and it was a position which the Catholic and repeal interests could not long permit to continue. However, this anticipates later events, and the Catholic hierarchy delighted with disestablishment and expectant of denominational education, were willing to sit back and allow Gladstone a full reign to see whether or not he would continue his hitherto sterling efforts to redress longstanding Catholic grievances.

This new found nationalism on the part of the Protestants perplexed the Catholic hierarchy; nor were the heads of the church alone in their

102 TCD, 1710/47, cutting from Freeman's Journal, 26 January, 1870.

103 Details of the controversy are carried in many of the Conservative papers. See, for example, London Times, 11, 12, 19, 29 January, 12 and 14 January, 1870.

104 TCD, 1710/47, cutting from Dublin Daily Express, 2 March, 1870.

scepticism over this new profession of nationalist intent on the part of the Ascendancy. At the Longford election of December 1869, where John Martin was contesting the seat against the son of the outgoing member, clerical influence was brought to bear very heavily in favour of Captain Greville-Nugent, the Liberal candidate. During the campaign one cleric, Rev Reynolds remarked, ". . . I can understand a Conservative opposition, or a Repeal Nationalist opposition, but the pale orange and mixed hybrids of Messrs Meany and Sullivan I cannot understand."¹⁰⁵ Nor was he alone in his perplexity. For a group which had always been a privileged elite with little or no sympathy for the great mass of the people to suddenly become their protectors was something which would take a while to sink in. Also, just as the Liberals jealously guarded their position as the spokesmen for the masses, so too, did the Catholic Church show an unwillingness to relinquish its 'natural' position as the leader of Catholic Ireland; a position which it had acquired through the vicissitudes of punitive measures, Penal codes and the Great Famine. It seems quite clear that any alteration in the political status quo in Ireland would require the approval of the Church before there could be any hope of success. If the Protestant leaders recalled the days of Grattan and hoped for a return to 1782, they had to realise that Ireland was a much different place a century later. Daniel O'Connell had led a peasant society into party politics with the Catholic sentiment dominant, and then on the ground leadership of Irish nationalism had passed into the hands of another group of 'natural' leaders, the parish priests.¹⁰⁶ However, it is indicative of just how out of touch these Protestants were that they did not seem to realise this fact until it was too late and their position had been further undermined.¹⁰⁷

With this new orientation on the part of the island's Protestants, especially the members of the Church of Ireland, the times demanded a

¹⁰⁵ London Times, 8 January, 1870, p 7.

¹⁰⁶ The whole subject of the changes which Ireland underwent during the nineteenth century and its rapid maturation is described in, J Lee, The Modernisation of Irish Society, (Dublin, 1972).

¹⁰⁷ On this point see D Thornley, 'Irish Conservatives and Home Rule,' in Irish Historical Studies, Col XI (1958-1959), pp 200-202.

new political movement. A movement which could utilise the traditional support which all national movements received from the peasant Catholic population while also capitalising upon this new-found nationality on the part of the Protestant elite. The major acquisition to the national cause had been vociferous landowners and clerics, leaders of the Protestant community, but the hope was that eventually this would permeate down throughout the entire Protestant action of the society.

On 19 May, at a meeting at Bilton's Hotel in Dublin, a new political movement was formed. It was called the Home Government Association, and the meeting had been organised by the prominent Irish lawyer, Isaac Butt. His background and career ideally suited him for the role of leader of a movement which hoped to unite Protestant and Catholic. Butt was the son of a Church of Ireland clergyman from Glenfin, county Donegal. In his early career he had gravitated to the sort of political position which might be expected of one from such a background. He had distinguished himself as one of the more prominent Tory spokesmen. In 1840, for example, he had been chosen to argue the case of the Dublin Corporation against reform in the House of Lords, and in 1843 he had debated the whole question of repeal with Daniel O'Connell. A former member of the Central Committee of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, his conservatism was complimented by a great love of country. This love of country had drawn him towards the Young Irelanders whose revolt in 1848 was doomed almost from the outset. His legal brilliance and patriotism were combined when he agreed to act for Smith O'Brien and Thomas Francis Meagher at their trial. His success there thrust him before the public gaze. Butt's patriotism and that of a man like Smith O'Brien was of the same stamp. Both men enjoyed a commonality even if they would differ as to the methodological implementation of their Irish identity.¹⁰⁸

Like many young and ambitious lawyers, Butt decided upon a parliamentary career and he sat in the House (albeit only occasionally)

¹⁰⁸ This paternalistic nationalism was described by one at the time as Orange Young Ireland, and when a Protestant Repeal Association was suggested in 1848 it was rumoured that Butt was to join. However, the rebellion broke out shortly thereafter and he was at least spared a place at Widow McCormack's cabbage patch.

from 1852-1865 as the representative for Hawick very briefly, and then Youghal. In 1864 he returned to Ireland to conduct a mercantile case and the following year he took the brief for the Fenian prisoners, which continued through to 1867. By 1868 he had become, 'the legal tribune of nationalist Ireland.'¹⁰⁹ Late in 1868 an Amnesty movement was formed which, although it had little effect upon the election of that year, became the major movement in Ireland in 1869. With Butt as President of the Amnesty Association, and also head of the new Irish Tenant League, he had become the acknowledged leader of the Irish people.

From this position as leader of the popular movement in Ireland and also as a prominent ex-member of the Irish Conservatives, Butt was in a unique position to be the bridge between the two traditions and the unifier of Ireland into one political movement, supported in both the north and south, and dedicated to the return of the national parliament.

The new movement was to be a child of the time. It was directed towards the new nationalists, and at its inception it was divided almost equally between Protestant and Catholic, and Liberal and Conservative, with the Catholics and the Liberals being slightly more numerous.¹¹⁰ It was to this Home Government Association that the alienated and disorientated Conservatives in places such as Monaghan turned their attention. Here they felt was the answer to their problems. For a

109 D Thornley, Isaac Butt and Home Rule, p 20.

110 There were 49 people at the Bilton meeting and these along with 12 later signators to the manifesto are generally seen as the founders of the HGA. Thornley gives the following breakdown, based mostly on A M Sullivan's account of the proceedings:

Catholics	25
Protestants	35
Not Known	1

The Catholic total was made up of:- 12 Constitutional Nationalists, 7 Liberals, 6 Fenians.

The Protestant total was made up of:- 28 Conservatives, 5 Conservative Nationalists, 2 Liberals.

Party political divide:- Conservatives 28; Liberals/Nationalists 33.

lifetime Conservative, disenchanted with the turn of events in Ireland over the previous two years there were very few alternatives. The most obvious was the most unthinkable; that is, to go over to the Liberals. This was impossible because of the unequivocal support which was given to Gladstone's party in Ireland by Cardinal Cullen and the Catholic hierarchy. Another possibility was to simply bow out of official life altogether, but the reaction of the Monaghan Protestants to the Coote and Madden affairs indicated that this was really a non-starter. For a class which had been brought up to expect and to enjoy the leadership of society to suddenly turn its back upon public life was unthinkable. Lastly there was the alternative offered by the HGA. It was, by far, the most efficacious method of indicating a change of heart towards England. It had a certain logic on its side; clearly Irish Protestant affairs would be better handled by Irishmen (hopefully Protestant) than by Englishmen. The events which surrounded the Longford election campaign of John Martin indicated that the Catholics in the HGA were not simply the church's men. Thus for a member of the Protestant Ascendancy to choose to join the HGA was to reject Westminster, the Catholic Church, and the arch-villain Gladstone, while accepting a new position where Irish Protestants would have a say in their own future and also fulfill their traditional function in society, that of action and leadership.

The Madden dismissal became the central issue for the Protestant community in the county during the first half of 1870, just as the Coote dismissal had been the rallying point for Protestant dissent the previous year. Also, sectarian passions continued at a high level, and this contributed to the peculiar complexion of Orangeism in the county. And although the Orangemen of Monaghan and the Protestants generally of south Ulster were moving towards a more nationalistic stance, sectarian incidents continued to inflame passions. For example, a mission by the Redemptorist Fathers in Monaghan town in May 1868 had been commemorated by the erection of a large cross in the Roman Catholic graveyard a short distance outside the town. However, on 10 June 1870 some party entered the graveyard, dug up the cross and took it to a neighbouring townland where it was broken up and burnt.¹¹¹ A subsequent meeting of protest

¹¹¹ S P O, C S O R P, 1870, 12691.

was held by the Catholic inhabitants of the area which was attended by around 3,000 people.¹¹² The meeting sent a petition to Earl Spencer which concluded,

we the Roman Catholic inhabitants of the Town and Neighbourhood of Monaghan beg of your Excellency to provide that a Stipendiary Magistrate reside permanently in the Town of Monaghan with a sufficient force at his disposal to protect us the Roman Catholic inhabitants of the Town and Neighbourhood from the recurrence of the serious bloodshed, disturbance, and miscarriage of justice of which we have been the victims since the 13th of July 1868. 113

If the year 1870 was to be one of national significance for John Madden, it was not to prove so for his brother William Wolseley. After receiving the support of his Orange brethren in being selected to lead his county in August 1869,¹¹⁴ which was followed by their presenting him with an address indicative of the esteem in which he was held by the Orangemen, on Monday, 10 January 1870, a great Orange demonstration was held in Clones to honour the County Grand Master, and he was presented with a token of their esteem by the Orangemen of the county.¹¹⁵

However propitious the commencement of the year was, it quickly turned sour for William. On Saturday, 5 February, John Madden recorded, "WWM got into a row at the Queen's Hotel Manchester."¹¹⁶ This was somewhat of an understatement because William was committed for trial for assault at the Police Court on Monday, 14th. The case opened three weeks later, and it took but two days for the judge to find him guilty of unlawful wounding and to sentence him to twelve months in prison. An appeal was lodged, but in mid-July it was refused. It was to be April 1871 before William Madden was to be back in the county. However, his position within the Orange Institution did not alter. At the county meeting on 17 May, 1870, the Orangemen passed a resolution regretting his absence, tendering him their sympathy, and then they went on to,

112 TCD, 1710/47, cutting from Freeman's Journal, 21 June, 1870.

113 C S O R P, 1870, 12691.

114 Monaghan County Minutes, 3 August, 1869, pp 149-151.

115 Madden's Diary, 10 January, 1870.

116 Ibid, 5 February, 1870.

". . . assure him that neither place nor time can alter our feelings of devotion, attachment and confidence which we entertain for him."¹¹⁷

The absence of Madden meant that the lead in Orange affairs was taken by his deputy, William Mitchell, of Lisdoogan, Monaghan. Mitchell was the Under-Sheriff who had been accused of 'fixing' the jury panel by Isaac Butt in 1868. Having been a co-defendant of Coote's gave Mitchell a certain aura amongst the Orangemen, but he does not seem to have had any aspirations towards the Master's chair, acting only as Madden's nominee while he was absent.

July 1870 was to see more trouble within the county. In March a special dispensation had been granted to a William McMahon, a blacksmith from Shanco, near Emyvale, to hold an Orange Lodge until a regular warrant was acquired. This was done and a small lodge was started and John Moutray, younger son of John Moutray JP, of Fort Singleton, was made Master. McMahon was elected Deputy Master. The Orangemen decided to meet on the Twelfth at the Moutray demesne. Near evening, as they were entering Shanco school-house, they were fired upon and McMahon was killed. This murder, while never approaching the significance of the Clarke killing the year before, kept the Orangemen in a defensive position. They rallied to the aid of the widow and children. Private donations were solicited, and each lodge also donated one night's dues.¹¹⁸

Elsewhere in Monaghan the Orangemen had less eventful commemorations. On 1 July they met at the demesne of Andre Allen Murray-Ker outside

¹¹⁷ Monaghan County Minutes, 17 May, 1870, p 162.

¹¹⁸ Monaghan County Minutes, 30 May, 1871, p 174. McMahon was well known in the barony of Trough. He had been the major motivating force in having an Orange lodge founded in the area. Most of the members of the lodge were employed upon the Moutray estate, the lodge met in the Protestant school there. Further, John Moutray was the Worshipful Master. This gave rise to complaints as to his father's right to sit on the bench at the hearing. See, S P O, C S O R P, 1870, 17736. A Catholic was eventually charged with murder but was acquitted. See, Return of Outrages Reported to the Constabulary Office, HC 1871 (C 332) LVII, 477. His widow applied for £1,000 compensation for her three children and was awarded £500, see, Returns of all Applications made to the Grand Jury of each County in Ireland for Compensation under 9th Section, Peace Preservation Act, HC 1875 (449) LXII, 159.

Newbliss to celebrate the battle of the Boyne, but while they were there they took the opportunity of burning an effigy of Inspector Noonan.¹¹⁹ The Orangemen of Clones met on 12 July and marched through Stonebridge to Knockbellamore where they were entertained by Rev Nelson.¹²⁰ But the major event of the anniversary season, of course, was the shooting of McMahon. This meant that since July 1868 the orange and green parties had been continually attacking each other for two years. The intermittent deaths which ensued were only the more visible episodes of a constant agrarian sectarian warfare which had broken out in south Ulster.

Eight weeks prior to the shooting of McMahon, on 19 May, 1870, the Home Government Association had been founded. It did not see itself as a political party as such. Rather, it wished to act as a political pressure group through which a prospective candidate could receive an official seal of approval from the association. Consequently it decided not to burden itself with other demands, but was to advocate but one measure; the restoration of the nation's parliament at College Green.

As such there was no reason why Protestant Tories should not become members of the Home Government Association. For example, in February 1870, and again in March, William Ledger Erson, one of the subsequent signators of the Bilton Manifesto had written to Isaac Butt requesting that he form a Home Rule movement.¹²¹ Erson was an Orangeman and a Conservative member of Dublin Town Council, and he was typical of the early Home Rulers who were attracted to Butt's banner.

John Madden joined the Home Government Association on Wednesday 10 August, 1870,¹²² and with his attendance at meetings of the association before his official adherence to the cause, he was one of the first of the Ulster Protestants to show an interest in Butt's movement. He quickly took an active role. On 19 October he submitted a paper for the Association's consideration. It commenced with a declaration which

119 TCD, 1710/47, cutting from Freeman's Journal, 13 July, 1870.

120 Ibid.

121 NLI, MS 8693 (3), Butt Papers, W L Erson to Butt, 28 February, 1870, 4 March, 1870.

122 Madden's Diary, 10 August, 1870.

stated that the legislative union between the independent parliaments of Great Britain and Ireland had depended upon certain clauses which were to have remained inviolable forever, but which had been continually ignored by the English governments. The declaration continued that oppressive penal laws had been imposed, bodies of armed police and soldiery quartered upon the people without consent, and that Ireland was taxed without having a proper say in the method in which the revenue should be expended. It continued,

These things being so, and the Imperial parliament having completely failed in the objects for which it was instituted - a large and influential section of the people of Ireland are desirous of obtaining the right to manage their own affairs.

But, as there are persons who fear that the establishment of an Irish parliament might prove subversive of the rights of property, and dangerous to vested interests, it has been deemed expedient to draw up a few of the fundamental principles of a constitution, which it is hoped may meet the approbation of Irishmen of all creeds and classes.

But, be this as it may, at all events it furnishes the grounds for what, at least, cannot fail to prove a subject of useful and interesting discussion.

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The paper then continued with a thirty point constitution for the new Ireland.

For a recently joined member, albeit one of the first representatives of an Ulster county, to undertake such a task, indicates a wholehearted support for and adherence to the principles of the Home Government Association. Madden was determined to add his own contribution towards the new Ireland. He felt, due to his associations with Orangeism in Monaghan, and most importantly, due to the fact that he himself was not an Orangeman, to be well placed to undertake the task of winning over the Orangemen of Ulster to the idea of a federal and native parliament sitting in Dublin. He had, as we have seen, suffered considerably at the hands of the English government for his uncompromisingly Protestant stance upon political issues during the preceeding two years. On the other hand, his aversion to England which had grown out of these activities, and the high-handed manner in which the English administration had treated Madden, meant that he could also appeal to certain of the Catholic sections of the HGA. His stumbling block would prove to be

the advanced nationalists who could neither forget nor forgive his actions at the time of the Amnesty parade in Dublin in October 1869.

The proposed constitution contained thirty articles. The first stated, "That hereafter all Irishmen shall be entitled to equal rights, privileges, and immunities." Article two stated that the parliament of Ireland would consist of a House of Commons and a House of Lords, bills would have to pass both houses before they could become law. This was very much in line with Isaac Butt's ideas, and it was clearly to appeal to the landed interests in Ireland. A lower house elected upon universal manhood suffrage, would be dominated by the Catholic element. The upper house would contain men of property and wealth, and this would preclude the vast majority of Ireland's Catholic population to the advantage of the Protestant portion of the country. Thus Madden hoped that both Protestant and Catholic aspirations could be balanced; ascendancy with democracy. Articles five and six dealt with religion. There was to be no established church. Article five commenced, "Whereas, Almighty God hath created the mind free, no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship or ministry, except by his own free will."¹²⁴ Needless to say a return to the days of the Protestant established Church was impossible. Article five accepted this fact, but more importantly, it also was a boon against the establishment of the Catholic Church in Ireland. This point was underlined in the following article which stated that the Irish parliament could never pass a law which would establish any religion.

With the religious question dealt with, the new constitution turned its gaze towards the other contentious issue in the mind of the landed class, that is, the rights of property. The next articles stated categorically that repeal of the Union would not affect any grants of land made previously by authority of the sovereign or any of her predecessors, and that obligations of debt, mortgage, and lease could be invalidated. Further, no title to land could be questioned, nor could the obligations of contract be ignored.

The next half dozen clauses was basically a Bill of Rights. It accepted habeas corpus, due process of law, no bills of attainder, no

124 Ibid.

excessive bail and that private property could not be taken for public usage. If this was not enough, Clause twenty-three was a virtual carte blanche which stated that "all persons shall continue to enjoy and freely exercise all the rights and privileges to which they have been hitherto entitled, and no existing right shall be impaired." Madden's document then turned its attention to the military which it stated would be held in strict subordination to the civil authority, and could not be quartered upon the public during peace time, and whilst a militia would be maintained, the right of the private citizen to carry arms would not be infringed upon. Finally, the freedom of the press and the right of free association was guaranteed.

This document gives us a self-depiction by Madden of his role both as the proponent of the case for the Protestant and the landowner to the Home Government Association, and vice versa. His preoccupation with the land and religious questions indicates much about his class consciousness. Whereas it is true that these had been the two major questions of the decade, the conclusions which Madden drew are directed exactly towards his own class. The established church was gone and it was crucial to their civil and religious liberties to ensure it was gone forever. With regard to property, Madden did not equivocate, his constitution would guarantee the rights of the landowners to hold what they had. To the point of view of one of his own social group the document was conciliatory. But there is, in the suggestion that it contains at the end of the introduction the plea to meet, irrespective of class or creed, and attempt to bring about a reconciliation between Ireland's two nations.

Madden's paper was presented to a meeting of the Association and, on the motion of A M Sullivan, seconded by S Lemon, it was agreed to publish the paper and have it circulated amongst the members to see if an agreement could be worked out. Whether or not any agreement was come to with regard to Madden's constitution it is impossible to say, but at the meeting of the Association held on 11 December, a letter was read to the General Council from John Madden which stated that a meeting of the Orange leaders was soon to be held for the purpose of discussing the Home Rule question. The police report of what transpired at the HGA meeting stated,

He says that the rules of the Orange Society are not consistent with the Repeal Agitation, but he (Mr Madden) proposes to have the rules so far rescinded and he hopes to carry his motion by a small majority and if so, he promises to bring the major portion of the Orangemen over to the side of the Home Rule Association. 125

This is a difficult report to explain. Firstly, Madden was not an Orangeman, and there is no evidence to support any claim that he joined the Orange Institution in late 1870. Secondly, there does not appear to have been a meeting of the 'Orange Grand Masters' as the report suggests. The only explanation would be that there was an informal meeting of the Orange hierarchy to discuss Home Rule, but because it was not a lodge meeting as such, there was no official report of it. It is feasible that if such an important summit was planned that outsiders 'of the right sort' would be invited. If a non-Orange member was to be invited from the border counties of Ulster, then there would have been few with credentials to match those of John Madden of Hilton. Be that as it may, nothing came of it, as there was no mass application by Orangemen to join the Home Government Association. If there was a meeting it achieved nothing. Nor was there any directive regarding Home Rule from the Orange leadership in December 1870. Indeed, the Orangemen were left to their own devices. This was probably due to a reluctance on the part of the leaders of the movement to commit themselves to a certain course of action which might prove unpopular. Many Orangemen, primarily those members of the erstwhile Established Church and also those located in the southern half of the island, were now deeply antagonistic towards England. In the north east there was the threat of some Presbyterians joining the renegade Independent Orange Association. It looked, perhaps, as if Orangeism might be on the verge of fragmentation. The leaders well remembered the Party Processions Act controversy of the previous decade.

From the point of view of the Home Government Association, the attraction of large numbers of Orangemen to the cause could be a dubious benefit. Ideally, the more Irishmen of either tradition who supported

125 Ibid, comments of Daniel M Ryan, Chief Superintendent, 'G' Division, Dublin Metropolitan Police. Ryan was the RIC man deputed to attend and report to Dublin Castle on the activities of the Home Government Association.

the concept of Home Rule, the better. However, the position of the Catholic hierarchy had also to be considered. Too many Orangemen in the new movement might automatically alienate the Catholic Church. But the most efficacious method of answering these questions was to place the Association before the people. The Home Government Association was in its infancy - the reaction of Ireland would dictate its development.

In the first five months of 1870, up to the time when the HGA came into existence, there were nine by-elections. Of these, three were uncontested.¹²⁶ The remaining six were, Derry City, Waterford City, two in Mallow, Tipperary county and Longford county. The two Mallow elections were fought by Major Laurence Edward Knox, the proprietor of the Irish Times. In the first contest, 3 February, 1870 Knox stood as a Conservative and was defeated 91 votes to 83 by the Liberal candidate Henry Munster.¹²⁷ However, three months later, on 10 May Knox once again fought the seat after Munster had been unseated upon petition. This time Knox went forward as a Home Ruler. He was opposed by a Liberal candidate, George Waters QC. This time Knox's vote increased by two votes to 85, whilst Waters' rose by a similar number to 93.¹²⁸

Little significance can be attributed to the Mallow votes. A small and unrepresentative borough electorate, predominantly Protestant, hardly altered its voting pattern. The Londonderry City by-election of 15 February 1870 was a result of Richard Dowse QC being appointed Solicitor General. He had won the seat for the Liberals in 1868 when he had defeated Lord Claud Hamilton. In 1870 he was required to address the constituency once again, and this time he retained the seat against a relatively unknown Conservative candidate called Robert Baxter. In 1868 Dowse had received 704 votes as opposed to Hamilton's 599. Two years later Dowse's vote dropped to 680 whilst Baxter received 592. So once again, the voting pattern was hardly altered with the exception that

¹²⁶ Edmund Dease, a Liberal was unopposed in Queen's county which was a Liberal stronghold. Hon David R Plunkett, QC was unopposed for Dublin University, it being perennially represented by Conservatives. George E Brown retained the Liberal seat in Mayo.

¹²⁷ Walker, Parliamentary Election Results in Ireland, p 113.

¹²⁸ Ibid, the following discussion of results is based upon Walker's listings.

around 20 Liberals did not come to the polls.

The more interesting contests took place in February; the first in Waterford and the second in Tipperary. In Waterford a number of Liberals were named as coming forward for the seat. It was also reported that the Catholic hierarchy was divided between whom to support.¹²⁹ A Conservative candidate was suggested, but it was eventually decided that they should not contest the seat. On the other hand, the independent nationalists were unwilling to have a Liberal returned unopposed, and they decided to propose the veteran nationalist, P J Smith, editor of the Waterford Citizen. In a very close contest the Liberal was returned by 483 votes to 475. And although this victory was hailed by the Liberals, the margin of Liberal success indicated that they could not depend upon the unswerving loyalty of the Catholic population. But more significantly, the Waterford result demonstrated that the nationalists were willing to fight not only the Liberal party, but the Catholic Church's endorsement as well. It was another step towards the growth of mutual respect which would be a prerequisite for any interconfessional political movement.

The by-election was called in Tipperary because the House of Commons ruled that Rossa was ineligible to sit in the parliament because he was at that moment incarcerated for treasonable activities. During the debate upon the Rossa case, William Johnston of Ballykilbeg noted that while,

. . . he could not but sympathise to a very great extent with those men, misguided as they were, many of whom were honest in their patriotic desire for the promotion of what they believed to be the good of their country.

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Nevertheless the house voted 301:8 to disqualify Rossa and order a new contest in the Tipperary constituency. When this was held the nationalists put forward Charles Joseph Kickham, the veteran Fenian who

¹²⁹ London Times, 8 February, 1870, p 5, reported that the Catholic Bishop of Waterford, Rt Rev Dr O'Brien was in favour of one Liberal candidate whilst Dr Flynn, another leading cleric favoured another. It is likely that Osborne, the eventual Liberal candidate was a compromise choice who enjoyed complete support of the entire clergy in the constituency.

¹³⁰ Ibid, 11 February, 1870, p 5.

had only been released from prison on medical grounds in 1869. Kickham managed to increase the vote which was polled for Rossa from 1,131 to 1,664, but the Liberal vote also increased from 1,028 to 1,668 and Kickham was defeated by four votes. Once again, the nationalists had demonstrated both to the Liberals in England and the Protestants of Ireland that they were willing to vote against Gladstone if it was for the national interest. This generally included voting against the wishes of the Catholic hierarchy at this time. Perhaps there was enough empathy for the two sides to unite for the good of Ireland.

There was an immediate opportunity to test this theory of inter-community politics as suggested by the Home Government. In December 1869 Capt Hon Reginald Greville-Nugent had overwhelmingly defeated John Martin in county Longford. However, he was unseated on petition which alleged bribery and undue clerical influence.¹³¹ As a result, a new writ was issued, and Greville-Nugent's brother, Hon George Greville-Nugent came forward in the Liberal interest. He was opposed by Captain Edward Robert King-Harman, the son of an influential landowner from Newcastle, county Longford. King-Harman came forward as a Home Rule candidate. He was opposed by the clergy and this opposition proved to be too much for King-Harman. Greville-Nugent was easily returned 1,217:923. However, King-Harman had at least managed to increase the nationalist vote from 411 to 923. It is likely that the increase was to a large extent the result of the King-Harman tenantry voting for the son of their landlord. A breakdown of the voting within the county indicates that the only area where the nationalist vote was greater than that of the Liberals is at Ballymahon where King-Harman got 450 to Greville-Nugent's 262. Elsewhere the Liberal had a strong majority.

The first by-election after the formation of the Home Government Association took place in Dublin City in August 1870. Once again, King-Harman came forward as the Home Rule candidate. By this time he was one of the four secretaries of the Home Government Association. He was opposed by a Catholic Whig, Sir Dominic Corrigan. Corrigan had contested the seat at the general election of 1868 when he had the united support of the Catholics in the constituency as he was an opponent of the Church

¹³¹ Ibid, 1 April, 1870, p 5, reported that Greville-Nugent had spent £4,825 on the election, and on 13 April, 1870 it reported that a Rev Patrick Fitzgerald and six other priests had been found guilty of exerting undue influence.

of Ireland. This may have somewhat clouded the issue.¹³² Once again, King-Harman had to contend with the opposition of the Catholic clergy in the area and once again, he was defeated.

By now it was becoming clear that the all-important factor in a nationalist political movement was missing - clerical support. This point was further underlined when, in January 1871, John Martin contested Meath. Running against a Catholic Liberal but without any clear support by the clergy for either side, Martin won an overwhelming victory. In February Mitchell Henry was returned unopposed for county Galway while June heralded the victory of P J Smyth for Westmeath.¹³³ His opponent was James Arthur Dease, and although both were Catholics, the local clergy decided to back Smyth who also had the support of the Fenians.

There was a clear trend in these results. The two King-Harman defeats indicated that a Protestant Conservative contesting a constituency upon Home Rule principles against a Catholic Liberal would not receive clerical support and would, consequently, be defeated. On the other hand, a Protestant could be returned if he had official Catholic support as was indicated at Meath. However, John Martin was not one of the average Home Rule Protestants, but a famous nationalist who had been imprisoned for his part in the 1848 Rebellion. Clearly a Catholic Home Ruler could receive clerical support and thus emerge victorious at the polls, but the key was this clerical support which was not forthcoming to the orange tainted Home Rulers. This would be a crucial point as the initial phase of the Home Government Association was one which strove for the unification of the advanced nationalists and the Protestants who were alienated from England by the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland.

This reaction against England in 1870 had been strongest in those areas where the Protestant population was overwhelmingly Episcopalian. During 1869 and the first half of 1870 the Protestants had cajoled, pleaded, blustered and then finally threatened, but it was the end of 1870 and 1871 before their apprehended alienation started to bear fruit. The anti-English stance of the Orangemen in the wake of the disestablishment crisis had been the foundation of the Home Rule upsurge in counties

¹³² Thornley, Isaac Butt and Home Rule, pp 110-111.

¹³³ These contests are discussed again below; see p 231.

such as Monaghan. Here local issues augmented this movement and, as we have seen, the administration's stance on the Madden and Coote affairs only tended to confirm the opinion of the border Protestants that their natural allies may not have been found in England. Thus while the idea of Home Rule was languishing within the Orange movement in Ireland generally, in county Monaghan in 1871 it was still quite strong. But elsewhere the Orange loss of enthusiasm for Home Rule was obvious. For example, at the traditional Twelfth parades in July, 1871 the speakers declared their loyalty to the Protestant institutions of the state. They condemned the secret ballot as tending to mitigate against the Protestant interest in Ireland, and many of them referred to Home Rule in very hostile terms. The change in Orange thinking can be indicated by the following. At a Dublin meeting of Orangemen in the Rotunda, at which Thomas F Caldbeck, JP, a prominent Orangeman presided, one of the speakers was interrupted, "(A Voice - What do you think of the repeal of the Union?) It might come to that yet and I would not go across the street to prevent it."¹³⁴ The following year the same Orangemen, meeting in the Metropolitan Hall declared Home Rule to be Rome Rule.¹³⁵

If the Orange movement as a whole had turned its back upon Home Rule by the summer of 1871, this was not the case in Monaghan. At the County Grand Lodge meeting at Thompson's Hotel, Clones, on 30 May, 1871, it was proposed by Flanagan and seconded by George Knight,¹³⁶

That we hereby request the attention of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland to the necessity of changing the Rituals and other documents of the Institution so as to make them correspond with the feelings and practices of the majority of the Orangemen of Ireland, and with regard to the Legislative Union, and other kindred matters.

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¹³⁴ Times, 14 July, 1870, p 6.

¹³⁵ Ibid, 20 July, 1871, p 9.

¹³⁶ George Knight, Corkimmons, Clones, was WM of LOL 586 which he founded in 1870. He was District Secretary of Drum lodge, 1866-1868, County Grand Secretary, 1865-1875, and Deputy County Master, 1876-1890. He was on the Grand Committee of Grand Lodge 1862-1864, as well as being trustee of Killyfargue Protestant Hall. Knight was a well known solicitor in Clones, and active in Conservative politics in the county.

¹³⁷ County Minutes, 30 May, 1871, p 172.

In Monaghan, at least, the Home Rule idea seemed to have taken strong root in the Protestant soil. However, not all border Protestants agreed, as Rev Flanagan found to his cost at the Orange parade at Cootehill where, after giving an impassioned speech on the subject, the Chairman of the meeting and the Orange assembly declared against the movement.¹³⁸

Since the formation of the Home Government Association in May 1870 up to the Monaghan by-election of July 1871 there had been six by-elections. We have already noted that King-Harman was defeated by Corrigan in Dublin City in August 1870. But the next contest, that of Meath in January 1871 pitted John Martin, described as an Independent Nationalist against a Conservative called Hon G J Plunkett.¹³⁹ In an amazing turn about Martin won easily by 1,140 votes to 684. This was hailed as the first nationalist success although it would be hardly accurate to define the King-Harman campaigns and those of John Martin as similar. The key to Martin's victory was that whilst the local Catholic clergy were in general pro-Plunkett, they took no active part in the campaign. Martin's victory also indicated that the clergy was unwilling to face another confrontation as it had in county Longford during the first Greville-Nugent campaign.

Also in January were the opportunities afforded by vacancies in Newry and Limerick county. In Newry the death of the Liberal, William Kirk, led to an uncontested replacement by his opponent in the 1868 general election, Francis Charles Needham, the Viscount Newry and Morne. In Limerick the appointment of Rt Hon William Monsell QC, to the position of Postmaster General necessitated his resigning the seat. He then re-addressed the constituency and was unopposed.

These two by-elections were quickly followed by another in Galway county. This time the Home Government Association got a candidate to contest the seat. Once again, their choice was a Protestant. He was Mitchell Henry, an industrialist from Manchester whose father was an

¹³⁸ Times, 20 July, 1871, p 9.

¹³⁹ Hon George John Plunkett was the nephew of Matthew Corbally, the late member. His father was the Earl of Fingall, the Lord Lieutenant for the county, a visitor at Maynooth and the most prominent Catholic aristocrat in Ireland.

Ulster Presbyterian. Henry was a reforming landlord whilst at least one of his Liberal opponents was a notorious evictor.¹⁴⁰ The opposition to the Home Ruler disappeared before nomination day, and Henry was elected unopposed. His election was significant in the process towards a popular Home Rule movement in so far as this was the first time that the contest had been between Home Rule and otherwise respectable Liberal candidates.

After Galway there was a lull in electoral contests until June 1871 when one of the seats for county Westmeath fell vacant. William Pollard Urquhart had represented the constituency from 1852-1857 and again since 1859. When he died Patrick J Smith who had been defeated at Waterford city in 1870 as an Independent Nationalist, came forward as a representative of the Home Government Association. Against him came James Arthur Dease. He would have been very suitable in the usual run of things, but the by-elections of the previous six months had put the Catholic clergy upon their guard, and it was recognised that if they were to attempt to lead their flock against the natural feeling within the constituency that they would lose their appearance of natural leadership. Consequently Dease withdrew and P J Smith was elected unopposed.¹⁴¹

On Saturday, 24 June, the senior member for the county of Monaghan, Charles Powell Leslie, arrived at his family residence, Castle Leslie at Glasslough with his nephew the Marquis of Waterford. They spent Sunday walking through the demesne and he was well enough to attend church service in the morning. However, during the night he took ill, and although he received some medication, it was not thought that there was any need for a doctor. However, he became ill around breakfast time and early in the afternoon of Monday, 26 June, C P Leslie died of inflammation of the wind-pipe.¹⁴² This meant that there would be a by-election

140 Mitchell Henry, 1826-1910. Son of an Ulster merchant living in Manchester, who had been MP for south Lancashire. He returned to Ireland and bought a large estate in Galway. He was elected a Home Rule MP for that county in 1871 and held the seat until he retired in 1885, at which time he made it clear that he opposed Parnellite Home Rule solutions.

141 This succession of by-election results is discussed in Thornley, Isaac Butt and Home Rule, pp 109-121. Much of this is reproduced verbatim albeit unacknowledged in Hanrahan, Irish Electioneering, pp 151-156.

142 Northern Standard, 1 July, 1871, p 1.

almost immediately. It would be the first by-election in Ulster since the unopposed return of Needhan six months earlier. There was no possibility of the Conservative being permitted to return a successor unopposed. The Liberals were sure to contest the seat, and it was also possible that the Home Government Association would choose this opportunity to undertake its first electoral contest in the province of Ulster. An obvious candidate would have been John Madden of Hilton Park, Clones. He had the advantage of being one of the earliest northerners to have associated himself with the HGA. He joined the association on Wednesday, 10 August.¹⁴³ A secret report sent to the Chief Secretary's Office dated 22 July, 1870, lists the members of the Committee. Of the 224 persons named only eleven appear to have strong northern roots.¹⁴⁴ Further, it was well known that the recent events had pushed John Madden's brother William also towards the nationalist camp, and as the County Grand Master he could be relied upon to deliver a significant number of votes for Madden and Home Rule. Outside the Orange Lodge there were other promising signs. A few weeks before, the Clones Town Commissioners had adopted a resolution in favour of Home Rule. On the other hand, many of the major Catholic interests in the HGA had realised that Orange Home Rulers would not receive clergy support and thus have little chance of winning an election. It seems likely that there was a certain amount of pressure from Dublin not to have Madden selected as the Home Rule candidate.

However, a Home Rule campaign in Monaghan would indicate to what extent the nationalism of the Monaghan Protestants in particular, and that of Ulstermen in general, was a real or a sham commodity. In addition, the campaign had a significance for the movement as a whole. The Home Government Association had been founded specifically as an amalgam of Protestant and Catholic interests. Ireland would have to prove its ability to achieve its goals in Ulster where sizeable populations of

143 Madden's Diary, 10 August, 1870.

144 SPO, CSORP, 1870, 20587. W W Harris, LL.D., had been High Sheriff of Armagh but resided in Dublin; as did J J Dodd whose family was from Coleraine. William Charters, Aughnaloo, Fermanagh, Capt George T Macartney, Lissanoure, Antrim, Rev William Steele, Portora, Enniskillen, John Tute, Belturbet, Cavan, A Given, Coleraine, Londonderry, J Cramsie, C McLorrinan, J L Vallely, all of Belfast, and John Martin, all gave home addresses in Ulster.

both religions lived in close proximity, and not in the three southern and Catholic provinces. And whilst it was very laudable if the handful of Protestants in somewhere like county Roscommon held similar political views to their Catholic neighbours, it bore no relation to the 'dreary steeples of Fermanagh and Tyrone.' In other words, Protestant and Catholic co-operation towards a united political entity in Ireland would sink or swim in the 'black north.' The by-election in the border county of Monaghan in 1871 was the first opportunity to test the Home Rule idea in an Ulster constituency.¹⁴⁵

There was immediate contention as to who would be the potential candidates for each side of the contest. Two days after the announcement of Leslie's death, the Freeman's Journal reported from its London correspondent that the hot favourites to contest the seat were Lord Cremorne, Isaac Butt and John Madden. Cremorne was described as a supporter of the government, Butt as a Home Ruler and Madden as an Orange Nationalist. The report added that the government was particularly anxious to find a Liberal colleague in Ulster for Thomas McClure in Belfast and the Solicitor General, Richard Dowse QC, MP for the City of Londonderry.¹⁴⁶

Privately other potential candidates were assessing their chances of success. On the Liberal and Catholic side the only chance of victory would come with the endorsement of the Catholic Bishop of the diocese, Dr James Donnelly. Thus Donnelly's correspondence gives an account of the efforts of the different factions to secure the support of the hierarchy for the impending election. On 27 June, for example, a Queen's Counsel on the North-east Circuit named John MaMahon wrote to Donnelly to assess his chances.¹⁴⁷ MaMahon was a Catholic and a Liberal. He was also a native of Ballybay, where his family had long been active in

¹⁴⁵ It would have been possible to have a Home Rule candidate contest the Newry seat in January, 1871. Lord Newry had consultations with the Liberals and they decided not to oppose him. This made it impossible for a member of the HGA to fight the seat with any chance of success. Benjamin Whitworth who had been unseated in Dundalk considered standing as a Liberal.

¹⁴⁶ Freeman's Journal, 28 June, 1871, p 3.

¹⁴⁷ PRONI, Clogher Catholic Diocesan Records, Dio (RC) 1/11A/1, John MaMahon to Bishop James Donnelly, 27 June, 1871.

local politics. He claimed that he wrote at the behest of John Brady¹⁴⁸ the Liberal MP for county Leitrim, and stated that he would address the county, and if practicable, he would contest it. It was not unusual for a candidate to address a constituency, and if he met with support from the electors hope that one of the major interests would endorse⁷ him. If this happened then he would actually contest the seat. If not, he would retire in favour of someone else.

At the same time as McMahon was writing to Donnelly, another potential candidate, Henry Owen Lewis sent a letter to Cardinal Cullen.¹⁴⁹ In it he requested that Cullen support him if he felt that there would be any chance of success, declaring that he would run upon Liberal and Catholic principles.¹⁵⁰ In addition, he stated that he was interested in the education question, adding that he would support a measure of denomination education, the most favoured measure of the hierarchy since the achievement of the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, and also a royal residence in Ireland. Lewis would appear to have been previously acquainted with the Cardinal if not Donnelly, although his family would have been known to both men. Further, Lewis did have certain points in his favour. Two days after receiving Lewis' letter, Cullen sent a note to Donnelly enclosing it and asking if he could be supported.¹⁵¹

148 John Brady, born in 1812 in county Cavan, he was educated at Clones Grammar School. Admitted licentiate of Apothecaries' College, England, in 1838, he elected Member of College of Surgeons of England in 1840. Elected Fellow College of Surgeons of Ireland in 1870. He was elected MP for county Leitrim in 1852 and sat until 1880. See, Liam McNiffe, 'The 1852 Leitrim Election,' in Breifne, Vol V, No 18, (1977-1978), pp 223-252.

149 Dio (RC)1 /11A/2, H Owen Lewis to Cardinal Cullen, 26 June, 1871.

150 H Owen Lewis, a son of Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur Gamble Lewis, a Deputy Lieutenant for county Monaghan, and Henrietta, only daughter of Henry Owen Scott of Scotstown. His father had been agent on the Rossmore estate, and he was a nephew of Lord Rossmore. The Lewis family were renowned Tories and Protestants, and it was thus a great achievement when the only son and heir converted. As Bishop Donnelly noted at the time, "Colonel Lewis' son a convert - oh!! Glory be to God." Henry was educated at TCD and was a magistrate for counties Dublin and Monaghan and a Deputy-Lieutenant for Monaghan. He was elected for Carlow borough in February 1874 and sat until he retired in 1880 as a Home Rule Liberal.

151 Dio (RC) 1/11A/5, Cardinal Cullen to Bishop Donnelly, 28 June, 1871.

It was not a strong plea on Lewis' behalf, but Cullen pointed out that both he and his wife were converts and also that they were very good friends of the London Jesuits. This would mean, in fact, that Lewis has shown a substantial monetary commitment to his new faith. From the Catholic point of view any prominent convert should be paraded before the public gaze, and what better way to do this than to have him returned to Westminster on 'Liberal and Catholic principles.' And bearing in mind the family's past history, Monaghan was a particularly suitable constituency. Another reason which Cullen made for pushing the Lewis candidacy was that he assumed him to have 'a long purse.'

The Cardinal noted in his letter that he would be more than willing to follow the advice of the local bishop. He asked Donnelly's appraisal of Lewis' possible chances and mentioned that if he had no possibility of success then there was no point in encouraging him. The correspondence, then, was to fulfil two functions. Firstly, Cullen wished to discover Lewis' realistic chances, and secondly, in so doing, he had quietly informed Donnelly that Lewis would be a most acceptable Liberal candidate for Monaghan in the eyes of the hierarchy.

Donnelly's reply, is, fortunately, preserved as he was in the habit of always writing a draft letter before any important reply.¹⁵² He pointed out that Lewis had not even addressed the county, usually the first step, and concluded that whilst wishing him every success, he felt that he had no chance whatsoever. Nevertheless, Donnelly did write to someone, presumably a local priest who had a certain amount of influence within the county, asking him to do his best for Lewis.¹⁵³ No doubt this was a direct response to Cullen's note. In any case, Lewis must have been an unexpected candidate as the Catholic and Protestant newspapers editors alike made no mention of him. The first time that Lewis' name was publicly linked with the Monaghan seat was on 6 July when his address was printed in the Freeman's Journal.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² Dio (RC) 1/11A/7, Donnelly to Cullen, undated draft.

¹⁵³ Dio (RC) 1/11A/3, unsigned and unaddressed telegraphic note in Donnelly's handwriting.

¹⁵⁴ Freeman's Journal, 6 July, 1871, p 3.

But there were other potential candidates in the field. Almost as swift to open negotiations was Charles Kenny of Glen Savage, Dublin.¹⁵⁵ Like MacMahon he was well known to the Bishop and his desire to represent the county was no recent manifestation. He wrote, postmarked 1 July, saying that he had gone down to Monaghan to see Donnelly but that he had not been at home. His long term interest in the seat is testified to when Kenny mentions, "I am interested as usual but more even than usual on the great question of home rule."¹⁵⁶ Kenny did not remain in contention for the seat very long as Donnelly received a second letter, postmarked two days after the first, asking if he thought that his brother Plunkett Kenny, "supported by the Liberals and opposed by all the Tory influence would be a success."¹⁵⁷ Neither of the Kennys subsequently emerge as candidates for the constituency, neither of them issue addresses, nor is there any further evidence of correspondence between them and Donnelly; it is interesting that minor Catholic gentry were now beginning to consider running for parliament in county Monaghan.

The Catholic press advocated Isaac Butt as the man best suited to represent county Monaghan. The announcement in the Freeman's Journal on 28 June that Butt would contest the seat was followed the following day, in the same journal, by a letter from Butt on the question of Ulster tenant right and the 1870 Irish Land Act. During the course of the epistle the leader of the Home Government Association stated,

Not having a seat in the House of Commons, I can do no more than suggest what seems to me as necessary and useful. This is one of the occasions which have sic made me reproach myself for having refused the offers of a return which more than one constituency made me. I feel I have thrown away an opportunity of being of use.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ Charles Kenny owned the Rock Savage estate at Inniskeen, county Monaghan. The family was prominent in Catholic interests in the county. For example, after the partial emancipation of Catholics in 1795, Joseph Kenny, Charles' grandfather, was the first Catholic summoned to sit on the Grand Jury. See Rushe, History of Monaghan, p 125. In the 1880s the family was shot at in an effort to force them to lower rents, and later boycotted which led to the Monaghan Orangemen marching to Inniskeen to harvest the crops.

¹⁵⁶ Dio (RC) 1/11A/8, Charles Kenny to Donnelly, 1 July, 1871.

¹⁵⁷ Dio (RC) 1/11A/11, Charles Kenny to Donnelly, 3 July, 1871.

¹⁵⁸ Freeman's Journal, 29 June, 1871, p 3. This letter was also carried in the Northern Standard, 1 July, 1871, p 3.

There seems little doubt but that this was engineered to strengthen Butt's claims to the constituency. Here was the great leader giving the people of Monaghan the opportunity to ask him once again to go forward for an Irish seat. And just in case they missed their chance, the Freeman followed this letter up with an editorial the next day which suggested that Monaghan, a county which had been fought by many of the best friends of Ireland in the past, must now select Butt as its champion. And

. . . the claims of every candidate must stand second to Mr Butt's; and we are confident that the patriotism of the gentlemen who are said to have a candidate in contemplation will suggest to them a retirement, which will do honour to themselves and justice to the constituency. 159

It is unclear whether the unnamed candidate was John Madden, but the Dublin Home Rulers were hopeful that Butt would take the nomination. Behind the scenes the Buttites were already at work. On 1 July it was reported that Richard Butt and P J Smith were in Monaghan discussing the possibilities of success with various parties.¹⁶⁰ It is likely that they were particularly interested as to the religious division of the electoral register. Butt himself must have been in contact with Rev Lawrence J O'Neill as to the size of the Catholic vote in the county. On 2 July O'Neill wrote to Butt as to the latter's chances of success in the constituency. And was of the opinion that, "it would be impossible to return Mr Butt without a large accession to the Catholic party."¹⁶¹ O'Neill continued that the Catholics were in a minority of 400-500 on the electoral register, and that that figure could be increased by around 100 more, being composed of Roman Catholics who would vote as they were directed by their landlords. In other words, a straight sectarian response would not be enough to see Butt elected. This meant that there would have to be some treating with the Orange nationalists and in a postscript O'Neill stated his opinion:

PS I am afraid that you could not reasonably hope to get from the Orange ranks what would make us equal in numbers to the landlords'

159 Freeman's Journal, 30 June, 1871, p 3.

160 Ibid, 1 July, 1871, p 3.

161 NLI, Butt Papers, MS 8693(5). L J O'Neill to Butt, 2 July, 1871.

forces - in this county. All past experience proves that it would be building on sand to trust in the Orange party where Irish or Catholic interests are at stake.

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This letter, from one of the most important clerics in the diocese almost certainly made Butt decide at this stage not to contest the constituency. He might well receive all of the Catholic votes in the county if McMahon retired, but it was unlikely that he would receive many Orange votes. Butt's actions less than three years before when James Clarke had been shot would not be forgotten by the Monaghan Orangemen. Nor would his case for the dismissal of the Monaghan jury, and the subsequent removal of Coote and Mitchell from office. However, this was still unknown in the constituency at large, and throughout the first week in July it was confidently predicted in the press that Butt would stand for the county.¹⁶³

Bishop Donnelly was in a particularly difficult position. He was known to have inclinations towards Home Rule as an ideal, but he had made no public statement in favour of the Home Government Association.¹⁶⁴ Normally the Catholic bishop of a diocese within which there was to be a contest would support the Liberal candidate if he was found to be sound on the major Catholic issues of the day. However, the advent of the Home Government Association had altered all that. There was less than unanimity within the ranks of both the hierarchy and the clergy, whilst the people were generally well disposed to the idea, if not to some of the persons involved.

The Liberal landlords within the county¹⁶⁵ would generally be approached with regard to the candidature of a Liberal. They, in direct or indirect discussion with the bishop would endorse one or other

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ See, Northern Standard, 1 July, p 1, Freeman's Journal, 1, 3 July, Dublin Evening Mail, 4 July, p 1.

¹⁶⁴ Hanrahan, Irish Electioneering, notes that Donnelly, Clogher; Thomas Nulty, Meath; and George Butler, Linerick all publicly pro Home Rule. In addition, John MacHale, Tuam; William Keanes, Cloyne and Michael O'Hea, Ros had endorsed the HGA, p 162 n 55.

¹⁶⁵ On the Liberal landlords see Chapter II, above.

of those candidates who hoped to appeal to the Liberal or Catholic electors. The year 1870 had considerably altered this process. The bishops had also to choose between the Liberal and Home Rule candidates, whilst many of the Liberal landlords, being invariably Whigs, were unhappy with the Liberal party since the passage of the Land Act of 1870. This point was brought out in Kenny's second letter when he stated that the Cremorne could not support the Conservative candidate, Leslie, unless they had turned Tory.¹⁶⁶ On the other hand, their basic conservatism meant that it was unlikely that any member of that family would come forward. It was to this end that Kenny had suggested to Donnelly that his brother Plunkett Kenny could come forward as a Liberal, "and might thereby gain the Cremorne interest, and yet be relied upon to support home rule."¹⁶⁷

The attitude of the great Liberal magnates like the Earl of Dartrey meant that the selection of a suitable Liberal candidate was almost impossible. Dartrey's attitude to the political party which he had supported all his life was summed up in a letter to his friend, Lord Dufferin, at the time of the organisation of a memorial to Gladstone complimenting him upon his Irish measures. At that time, but two months after the Monaghan election, he wrote,

You must be well aware of how strongly I disapproved of both the Church & land bills, & how on every occasion I voted in the H of Lords for their modification; it would therefore be very inconsistent if I were now to join in a demonstration complimenting Mr Gladstone on the success of his Irish policies, exemplified in the paper you enclose me by allusion to 'the leading measures of 1869 & 1870' - I am the more disinclined to join in this political move, as experience only confirms the view I originally took of the measures that they would be messages not of peace but of discord. ¹⁶⁸

As the above indicates, there could be little common ground between

166 Dio (RC) 1/11A/11, Kenny to Donnelly, 3 July, 1871.

167 Ibid.

168 PRONI, Dufferin Papers, D 1071/H/B/F, Lord Dartrey to Dufferin, 27 September, 1871.

Lord Cremorne, his father the Earl of Dartrey, and the Catholic Bishop of Clogher.¹⁶⁹ The Liberal party in Ulster was, with the advent of Gladstonian Liberalism, clearly as improbable an amalgam of radicalism and conservatism as was the fledgling Home Rule movement.

Throughout the first week of July Donnelly was inundated with correspondence concerning the representation of county Monaghan. Not only was there the letter from prospective candidates like the Kennys and McMahon, but Charles Callan¹⁷⁰ also entered the fray. Callan was a friend of Donnelly's, and the representative of the neighbouring constituency of Dundalk. The Callan correspondence clearly indicates that he was being utilised by the Liberals in London as a link with the Catholic bishop. He had telegraphed to the bishop on 28 June once he heard of the vacancy in the Monaghan representation, although the document has not been preserved. Donnelly then replied to Callan that he was of the opinion that only Lord Cremorne could stand in the Liberal interest and be assured of success.¹⁷¹ However, he would not come forward, presumably due to the fact that he felt that Gladstone had gone too far with his Irish measures. In addition, it transpired that Cremorne's father, Earl of Dartrey, was out of favour with the Catholic electors of the county. According to Callan, Dartrey had been made a belted earl in repayment for the Liberal victory of his son in 1865.¹⁷² However, although the success was a result of the Catholics' voting strength, Dartrey had given all the patronage to the Protestants, and had followed this up by failing to support the Charter Resolutions during the 1868 session.

¹⁶⁹ Donnelly's actions at subsequent elections indicate that he favoured a Liberal over a Conservative, a Catholic over a Protestant, but a Home Ruler over a Liberal. Thus the first step in retrieving the representation of the county from the Conservatives was to support a Protestant Liberal (no Catholic being able to win the seat at this time), and subsequently to support a Catholic Home Ruler over a Liberal. See below, Chs V, VI, VII.

¹⁷⁰ Philip Callan, sat on behalf of the Liberal interest in Dundalk. In 1874 he was returned for Louth and Dundalk but elected to sit for Dundalk. In 1880 he was elected a Home Ruler for county Louth, although defeated in Dundalk by Charles Russell, who stood as a Liberal. In 1885 he stood as an Independent Nationalist against the official candidate, Joseph Nolan, but was defeated. He contested the seat again in 1892 when he was defeated by Tim Healy who stood as an Anti-Parnellite.

¹⁷¹ Dio (RC) 1/11A/9, Callan to Donnelly, undated.

¹⁷² Ibid.

For this reason it was unlikely that the Catholic electors of the county would again support a member of that family.

Clearly Callan, the representative for such an important and neighbouring constituency had a lot of influence both with Donnelly and with the Catholic electors in general, and the correspondence makes it clear that he was acting as the link between the Liberal leaders in London and the Catholic interest in Monaghan. It was he who carried out the confidential negotiations with the government over the Monaghan constituency. Callan also acted as Donnelly's eyes and ears in London. A letter postmarked 1 July, pointed out that in the capital the candidature of John McMahon was not looked upon as meant to be contested if it entailed an expensive campaign. Similarly, Isaac Butt, who was also linked with the constituency was regarded in London as being too financially embarrassed to be able to go to the polls. Furthermore, Callan was of the opinion that neither would have much chance due to the bigotry which existed in the county. In other words, the Liberals in London, as well as Callan and Donnelly, recognised that both Butt and McMahon would only attract Catholic votes whilst a combination of the two religions was required to unseat the Tories.

In an attempt to come to some sort of decision in London as to the manner in which the Liberal, and in Monaghan this implied Catholic, voters should be catered for, Callan had discussions with the Liberal Chief Secretary for Ireland, Chichester Fortescue. They both recognised that with the Lord-Lieutenancy of the county and the colonelship of the Monaghan militia up for appointment, that the government should be able to ensure the support of the more 'Protestant' of the Liberals. It was essential that local magnates such as Earl of Dartrey, Lord Rossmore and Sir J Barret-Lennard be induced to endorse the Liberal candidate. This would mean that enough Protestant Liberals on those estates would vote for the Liberal candidate to ensure that the Tory was defeated. The party's hand would be strengthened, of course, if a member of the Liberal aristocracy in Monaghan could be persuaded to contest the seat. 173

173 This information comes mostly from Dio (RC) 1/11A/9, but also from /12, /14 and /16. During his discussions with Fortescue the name of "young Wesnelin son of the Governor of the Bank of England and himself a Dartry" was mentioned as a possible candidate. However, he had refused the nomination. The suggestion that Wesnelin be selected suggests that the Liberals were more interested in a candidate who would appeal to four or five Whigs than one who enjoyed wide popularity.

The Liberals in county Monaghan, in other words, were without a suitable candidate. And whereas many aspiring candidates could be found, for the campaign to be a success the Liberal nominee should be a Protestant member of one of the local landowning families. Without any movement on that score an alternative had to be found. And it just so happened that Callan had someone in mind. He indicated a personal interest in the seat by suggesting his friend Benjamin Whitworth¹⁷⁴ for the vacancy. It is possible that Callan had the nomination of his friend at the back of his mind throughout the entire correspondence with Donnelly. Whitworth might well have been expected to be a popular choice with the electors. He, like Lewis, was long of purse which was a necessity in the nineteenth century, and he was also 'sound on Irish issues,' except as Callan pointed out "that he won't declare for the whole program of the Home Rule Association."¹⁷⁵ This was a benefit to his popularity with Donnelly whose nationalist proclivities were already known. Whitworth was thus likely to be a good choice. He was close enough to the Home Rule position to appeal to Donnelly, and yet he was a Protestant Liberal who might receive the necessary endorsement of the local Whigs.

Donnelly's reply to Callan is not available, but clearly the Whitworth nomination was not continued with. Most of the further correspondence between Callan and Donnelly is with regard to the attempts to get a Cremorne to stand in the Liberal interest. Throughout Donnelly asserted that only Cremorne could guarantee a victory, and he goes so far as to state, ". . . we were disposed to forget and forgive the past and support him if he pledged himself to properly represent us in the future."¹⁷⁶ However, as he would not consent to stand, the question was to agree who should get the Liberal nomination and the support of the

174 Benjamin Whitworth, 1816-1893. An advanced Liberal, he was the son of a merchant from Drogheda who also had large scale business interests in Manchester. He had been the MP for Drogheda from 1865 until he was unseated in the famous petition of 1869. His son succeeded him to the seat. He was thus without a seat for the duration of the Gladstone first administration. In 1874 he again contested Drogheda as a Liberal but was defeated by W H O'Leary the Home Ruler. In 1875 he won a by-election as a Home Ruler for county Kilkenny. He resigned in February 1880 to fight Drogheda, which he won and represented until the seat disappeared under the Redistribution of Seats Act, 1885.

175 Dio (RC) 1/11A/12, Callan to Donnelly, 4 July, 1871.

176 Dio (RC) 1/11A/16, Donnelly to Callan, undated draft.

Catholic hierarchy. And in a subsequent letter to Callan Donnelly mentioned that Isaac Butt had withdrawn, and that neither McMahon nor Madden had addressed the county.¹⁷⁷ The only address on the Liberal side had come from Lewis. Donnelly stressed to Callan that he would, ". . . personally be well pleased he should be successful or at least make a decent fight. I thought you might get pressure brought to bear on Dartrey and others to support him."¹⁷⁸ This request was made by Donnelly as a direct result of the letter he had received from the Cardinal. As a result of it,¹⁷⁹ Callan had assumed that Lewis was now the favoured candidate of the hierarchy, and when news of this reached McMahon he telegraphed the bishop for clarification, stating in London that he had been tricked.¹⁸⁰ Finally Callan replied that further discussion with Glynn and Fortescue had led to another approach being made to Dartrey but that a telegram would be sent on the following day, 5th, with the result. However, Callan was not hopeful because he believed the Dartreys to be 'a bad lot Root and Branch.'¹⁸¹ The Whig, he added, is a false cur, neither fish, foul nor yet good for herring and "the Dartrey evidently would rather go with the black Presbyterians than with the Catholics." As it was, Dartrey decided that unless Lewis retired he would not start Cremorne. This Lewis did not do until 8 July, by which time a candidacy by Cremorne was an impossibility. This was shrewd

177 Indeed Madden in a letter to Donnelly written on 8 July stated that, "I shall certainly defeat Mr Leslie, if Mr Lewis had withdrawn (as it is reputed he had done) and if no one else comes forward in his place." Dio (RC) 1/11A/20. From this it seems clear that but one week before the election McMahon's candidacy was not known in the county at all. In fact, he had telegraphed Donnelly from Dublin, 7 July, 1871, that his address would appear soon, and on 8 July he wrote that he hoped to go down to Monaghan, but another telegram sent on Sunday, 9th stated that he would arrive early on the Monday. While addresses often would not appear until late in the campaign, even in nineteenth century terms this was a rather late entrance for a would-be contender for a parliamentary seat. See Dio (RC) 1/11A/17, 21, and 27.

178 Dio (RC) 1/11A/16, Donnelly to Callan, undated.

179 Donnelly subsequently wrote to Callan to the effect that he could not understand how Callan could assume that Lewis was the official nominee.

180 Dio (RC) 1/11A/15, Telegram, McMahon to Donnelly.

181 Dio (RC) 1/11A/12, Callan to Donnelly, 4 July, 1871.

timing on Lewis' part because it seems quite clear that Cremorne could have won the seat if he had contested it as the only Liberal, and in that case he would certainly hold it in a general election. With Cremorne no longer in the picture Callan telegraphed Donnelly that he would attempt to get CARTRE and the other prominent Liberals to support Lewis.¹⁸² The protracted negotiation had failed.

Whilst the Liberal party nomination was being decided behind closed doors in London and Monaghan town, the press continued to discuss the possible candidates' relative merits. Most sources seemed to believe that Lord Cremorne would not contest the seat. The Dublin Evening Mail for example, reported on 4 July that it was unlikely that Cremorne would contest the seat.¹⁸³ And as we have noted above, a Cremorne candidacy was always unlikely. McMahon and Lewis, on the other hand, were both seen as potential candidates. The Freeman's Journal reported that the Liberal party in London had decided to endorse whichever of the two was nominated.¹⁸⁴

Apart from the Liberal candidate, the nominee of the Home Government Association could be expected to gain the support of at least some of the Catholic electors. Initially Isaac Butt was suggested and the Freeman's Journal strongly supported his candidacy. Even the conservative Northern Standard¹⁸⁵ reported that Isaac Butt was contesting the seat on Home Rule principles, whilst the London Times noted that Butt would stand if the people of Monaghan wished him to.¹⁸⁶

In addition to Isaac Butt the press reported a number of other potential runners for the new Home Government Association. On 3 July the London Times reported that a Mr R Armstrong of Castleblayney had decided to address the county as a Home Ruler in favour of 'the elevation of the tenant farmers of Ireland.'¹⁸⁷ There is no indication as to who

182 Dio (RC) 1/11A/14, Telegram Callan to Donnelly, 5 July, 1871.

183 Dublin Evening Mail, 4 July, 1871, p 2.

184 Freeman's Journal, 7 July, 1871, p 7.

185 Northern Standard, 1 July, 1871, p 1.

186 London Times, 3 July, 1871, p 9.

187 London Times, 3 July, 1871, p 9.

Armstrong actually was; the family name is concentrated in two areas within the county, around Clones/Drum where the members were generally members of the Orange Institution, and in the Castleblayney area. During the 1883 by-election a James Armstrong acted on Pringle's election committee, and it is more likely that Mr R Armstrong of Castleblayney was related to the later Liberal.¹⁸⁸ In any case, he was never really a serious challenger for the Home Rule nomination. But apart from Armstrong, other Home Rulers were suggested. As we have seen, Madden's name was linked to the constituency almost from the start. In addition, there was the suggestion that Rev Joseph A Galbraith, one of the founders of the Home Government Association might address the county. The advantage of running Galbraith was that he was a former Conservative, came from the north of Ireland and was a Fellow of Trinity College Dublin, the bastion of the Protestant Ascendancy.¹⁸⁹ Certainly his candidature might prove attractive to the large Orange vote within the county. Furthermore, he was a very active member of the Masonic Order in Dublin, many weeks attending more lodge meetings than he did political gatherings. On the negative side, Galbraith was a convert to the Church of Ireland from the Presbyterian Church which would not endear him to the significant number of Presbyterian voters in the constituency, and while not being well enough known in county Monaghan to be wholeheartedly received by the Protestants, he might have been Protestant enough not to receive the support of the Catholic clergy.

John Madden, the local landlord and prominent member of the Home Government Association was the strongest challenger to Isaac Butt. Initially, the press had suggested that his brother William Wolseley Madden might contest the seat on Home Rule principles.¹⁹⁰ This was never really a possibility as it would be inconceivable that Catholics

188 On James Armstrong see below, Ch VII, p442, n 42 Orange information comes from the County Minutes.

189 Joseph Allen Galbraith, 1818-1890. Born in Dublin of Donegal Presbyterian family. Joined Church of Ireland whilst student at TCD. A Conservative, he was an early member of HGA. Stood aloof from the movement after Butt's death for a time. Never joined Land League but joined the National Land League as a protest when T D Sullivan was imprisoned, in 1887, and resigned from Representative Church Body. See TCD, Galbraith Papers, Misc. XI, 3824-55.

190 London Times, 29 June, 1871, p 10.

would support such an Orange zealot. His brother John Madden, whilst being a confirmed Protestant, was not tainted with the Orange Order, A factor which had stood him in good stead at the time of his Dublin protest against the Cabra meeting.¹⁹¹ Butt, it had to be remembered, was a former member of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, and whereas his allegiances had changed, he still received a bad reaction from many Catholic prelates.¹⁹²

Madden had initially been suggested as an Orange Nationalist candidate in opposition to Isaac Butt among others.¹⁹³ However, as the Freeman's Journal editorial hinted, he was the local nominee of the Home Rulers whose emergence might stop Butt addressing the county. In any case, Butt finally did not come forward against Madden.

The candidature of John Madden perplexed many people on both sides of the religious divide. On 3 July he wrote a letter to the Dublin Evening Mail in which he stated that at the time of the Act of Union his grandfather, Samuel Madden, was the High Sheriff of the county and Foreman of the Grand Jury which unequivocally opposed the act. Once it was passed, however, like most Tories the Madden family had accepted the will of the majority,

But now that the English Parliament has repealed a portion of the Act of Union, I, for one, solemnly repudiate the shreds that have been left behind.

194

Madden's major difficulty was to persuade the Catholic electors that he, a Protestant landlord, was the most suitable candidate for

191 Madden Documents, Hilton, Letter Charles Dudley Ryder Madden to his mother, 24 November, 1869, states, "I was so much pleased with Jack's conduct in Dublin . . . It shows the wisdom of his not being an Orangeman as they can't turn round and call him a party man."

192 On 1 July, Bishop Donnelly of Clogher received a letter from A J McKenna of Donaghadee, county Down, but a native of the county, which included a confidential note. Donnelly was in the habit of indexing letters with some note of the contents. The envelope bears the inscription, 'A J McKenna on Butt.' Unfortunately Donnelly destroyed the confidential note which he had received about Butt, but the tone of the accompanying letter indicates a rather heinous charge had been levelled. This may go some way to explaining Donnelly's luke-warm attitude towards Butt. PRONI, Dio (RC) 1/11A/4, A J McKenna to Donnelly, 29 June, 1871.

193 Freeman's Journal, 28 June, 1871, p 3.

194 Dublin Evening Mail, 5 July, 1871, p 5.

them to choose as their next representative to the parliament at Westminster. This meant that he had to receive the support of Bishop Donnelly, or at least an assurance of non-opposition. Phil Callan had written to Donnelly that in his opinion Madden was 'too much of an anti-Catholic of the old Cromwellian stamp,'¹⁹⁵ and this was an opinion which must have been held by many Catholics within the constituency.

On 7 July the Freeman's Journal reported that Butt would definitely not contest the county Monaghan by-election. Presumably so as to save face it was also reported that Butt had written a letter to this effect some days ago but that it had somehow gone astray.¹⁹⁶ On the same day Madden held his first election meeting in Clones. During a fiery speech he stated that the curse of Ireland was that religion was imported into every question. Home Rule would not be subversive to Protestantism, and he then avowed himself a 'Gladstonian Repealer' which, unfortunately, he did not define. Madden then denied that he had changed his political principles. Rather it was the English government which had changed its principles. With regard to the religious question, he admitted that he had been active at the time of the disestablishment issue, but he was willing to meet the electors half way. "The Church Bill had passed, and probably it was as well." Finally Madden committed himself to full support for Ulster tenant right.¹⁹⁷

The other speaker was Rev Flanagan. He backed all that Madden had said. He added that Ireland could no longer be governed as a conquered country. The only hope for the island was a return to the constitution of 1782. Flanagan concluded by reminding his audience that Ireland was a civilised country when England was an island of barbarians.

In his election address Madden apologised to the electors of the county for its late appearance. This was a result of the fact that he had only heard for certain that Isaac Butt was not coming forward, the day before. This also meant that whilst the other hopeful candidates

195 Dio (RC) 1/11A/9, Callan to Donnelly, undated.

196 Freeman's Journal, 7 July, 1871, p 3.

197 Dublin Evening Mail, 8 July, 1871, p 2, London Times, 10 July, 1871, p 6.

had all approached Donnelly, that the Madden case had initially gone by default. Only one communication had been received in Madden's favour. On 2 July Donnelly received a letter from Rev Thaddeus O'Malley.¹⁹⁸

O'Malley was well known in nationalist politics in Ireland. He was a former O'Connellite and had advocated the federal principle as a possible solution to Ireland's problems for many years. He pointed out in his letter that Butt had called him, 'The Father of Federalism.' And after claiming the credit for the Clones Town Commissioners' passing a pro-Home Rule resolution, he continued that at a Council meeting of the Home Government Association held on 30 June, support had been given to the candidacy of John Madden as proof that Home Rule, 'had a native growth in Monaghan and was no foreign importation.'¹⁹⁹ Significantly, the HGA decided not to take part in the election as a body. Presumably this was so as not to lose face if Madden was defeated. O'Malley then confided,

Entre-nous, Mr Butt would hardly be of much use to us in the House, of course is anxious to get in, like all lawyers, to serve himself. We are determined to set our faces against all lawyer candidates. Mercantile men for our boroughs and country gentlemen for our counties ought to be our mot d'ordre. 200

This is interesting because it indicates a divergence within the movement. This divergence may, in some measure, explain the reluctance of the Home Government Association to officially work for Madden. But if country gentlemen were to be the favoured candidates of the Association and the local bishops could be persuaded to support them, then the effect upon public opinion might be enormous. As O'Malley pointed out, the sight of the Catholic bishop and his clergy supporting so decidedly Protestant a Home Ruler 'from pure patriotism' would have tremendous effect both upon the local Catholic population and upon those Protestants who kept a distance from the Home Government Association because of sectarian apprehension.

¹⁹⁸ Rev Thaddeus O'Malley, had been a curate in Philadelphia where he got into difficulties with his bishop and returned to Ireland. In Dublin he was appointed to a chaplaincy at the Presentation Convent. He was always very active in politics, and had been one of the foremost advocates of federalism.

¹⁹⁹ Dio (RC) 1/11A/10, O'Malley to Donnelly, 1 July, 1871.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

In an effort to strengthen the appeal to the Catholic population of Monaghan, O'Malley issued a circular to 'The Catholic Electors of Monaghan' which claimed that Home Rule was essential to the well being of Ireland. It then asked the question,

Can you refuse a vote for the grandson of Samuel Madden, who, with his fellows, placed their lives and fortunes to assist Grattan in 1782? That grandson - John Madden - is as sturdy as his sire, as ready as he to join life and fortune for the cause he had espoused. Don't be kept back from his interest by any feeling of party spleen or religious bogotry. Shut your ears against every other issue - even though desirable, such as grand jury reform, or denominational education - look upon them all as insignificant.

201

This address, signed by O'Malley, was supposed to aid Madden's cause. However, it tended to work against him as it invoked the wrath of the Cardinal and the Lord Chancellor who were at this time still hoping to wrest substantial measures of reform from Gladstone.

On 8 July Bishop Donnelly received a delegation of two men to ask him to support John Madden. One of the men was Dennis McDermott, a Catholic from the Clones area. They brought with them a letter from Madden asking Donnelly not to oppose him.²⁰² This Donnelly promised and no more. As with the correspondence of other prospective candidates, Madden's letter expressed his desire to contest the seat if there was 'a fair prospect of success.'²⁰³ Madden appealed to the bishop,

. . . if you are not prepared to give me an active support, at least you and the clergy of your church, will not be found numbered among those who oppose me - I may add that I have already received very encouraging promises of support, from people of all creeds and classes - and it is believed that I shall certainly defeat Mr Leslie, if Mr Lewis has withdrawn, (as it is reported he had done) and if no one else comes forward on the same principles in his place.

With Madden's past history he could not come out and request the Catholic Bishop of Clogher to publicly endorse him. On the other hand, he held out the carrot that now that Lewis was out of the running, and

201 O'Malley's address was published in a number of Liberal newspapers, see Dublin Evening Mail, 7 July, 1871, p 2.

202 Donnelly's Diary, 8 July, 1871.

203 Dio (RC) 1/11A/20, Madden to Donnelly, 8 July, 1871.

there was no substitute, he could defeat Leslie. The choice was then between the arch-Tory Leslie, a Protestant landlord, and Madden, from the same class, but expousing liberal policies as well as Home Rule. The choice should have been an easy one for Donnelly to make.²⁰⁴ In addition, a promise not to oppose a candidate inferred that you would not endorse any of his opponents. In other words, when Donnelly said that he would not oppose Madden he was, in fact, suggesting that he would remain publicly neutral, irrespective of his personal predelection. It is unlikely that Donnelly would have made such a commitment if there was still a possibility of Butt's emergence as a candidate. This had been dashed with Madden's public meeting the night before.²⁰⁵

Madden's chances could only have been improved by John Martin's writing to Donnelly in favour of the candidate. Martin had been defeated in Longford in December 1869 purely because the local hierarchy backed the Liberal candidate, so he was well aware of how crucial it was to have the Church's nomination. Martin, a presbyterian veteran of Young Ireland and one of the most respected of all the aged nationalists, appealed to Donnelly's nationalism, claiming that,

. . . the voting of the Monaghan Catholics for Mr Madden would be a 'heaping of coals of fire on the heads' of the enemies of the Catholic people. And to do such an act at the very time of the insolent July anniversary parades of the Orangemen would signalise the act. . . 206

The support which Madden's campaign received from Dublin was well broadcast over the county with the appearance of a printed election appeal from Home Government Association headquarters dated 10 July. In an effort to secure Catholic support for Madden the majority of the signatories were Catholics, but all were well known. They were John Martin MP, W J O'Neill Daunt, Rev J A Galbraith FTCD, A M Sullivan and T D Sullivan of the Nation, H Maunsell of the Dublin Evening Mail,

204 As already noted, p 243 n 177 Madden was still unaware of MacMahon's candidacy, he having delayed the publication of his address due to his belief that Donnelly had decided to support Lewis.

205 I have located an advertising bill for the Clones meeting. It is preserved in the State Paper Office at, CSORP 1871 13837. Interestingly Madden used J Wilson of Clones as his printer. He published all the Orange material and was himself a prominent Orangeman.

206 Dio (RC) 1/11A/24, John Martin to Donnelly, 10 July, 1871.

Alderman James Plunkett, Edward Purdon JP, ex Lord Mayor of Dublin, James Murtagh and Thomas Ryan.²⁰⁷ Of these only three were Protestants, John Martin, Rev Galbraith, and Edward Purdon. Martin was, although a Presbyterian, an advanced nationalist whilst the other two were Protestant Tories. Galbraith was to rise to prominence as the foremost nationalist Protestant cleric. Purdon had been Lord Mayor of Dublin at the time of the Hilton meeting which set up the HGA, and as a Protestant Tory, was the only one of the ten whose political views were similar to Madden's own. At this date there were still enough Orange and Tory home rulers in the Dublin association so that they could have placed their names to this appeal if required. The fact that the signatories were almost all Catholic and nationalist indicates that the Dublin group felt that it was the Catholic voters who needed to be wooed more than their Protestant counterparts. Further, there is evidence that Thomas Ryan, A M and T D Sullivan, James Plunkett and John Martin were all either closely associated with the Fenian movement or the Amnesty Association.²⁰⁸ The Address also took extra pains to appeal to the Catholics. Having requested both groupings not to vote Tory or Whig upon sectarian lines, it pointed out that it was more difficult for Catholics to vote for a Protestant Home Ruler than for Protestants. And the corollary was also true. In this case the Home Ruler was a Protestant and it was to the potential Catholic Home Rule voters that the major effort had to be directed.

On 7 July, Lewis had written to Donnelly informing him that he was withdrawing from the contest. This step was clearly taken as a result of a letter which he mentioned he had received from Donnelly to the effect that without the Ballot he had no chance. Thus he had decided to bide his time until the general election when he guaranteed to contest the county. He then asked Donnelly "for a distinct pledge of all the support in your power to give when that time shall arrive."²⁰⁹ It is

207 Dio (RC) 1/11A/23, Madden Election Poster.

208 See CSORP 1870 20587. Secret report Daniel Ryan, Chief Superintendent, G Division, Dublin Metropolitan Police re Fenian involvement in the Federalist movement. Ryan underlined all those members of committee who were either active Fenians or prominent in the Amnesty Association.

209 Dio (RC) 1/11A/18, Lewis to Donnelly, 7 July, 1871.

ironic that the following day, both the Freeman's Journal and London Times quoted from his election address and added that he would have the support of the clergy.²¹⁰ Donnelly refused to shackle himself to one candidate so long beforehand, although he expressed admiration for his address.²¹¹

Lewis' address advocated the Secret Ballot, reform of the Grand Jury system (a key issue in Monaghan since the McKenna trial in 1869), the restoration of the Pope to the 'Patrimony of St Peter' and denominational education. He also paid lip-service to the Home Rule idea. He stated, "I shall be glad to see purely local measures discussed in Ireland, and the large expenditure of our money, which under the present system takes place in London, transferred to Dublin."²¹²

Lewis had recognised that he would appeal only to Catholic voters. Initially it had been suggested that because he was a nephew of Lord Rossmore that he would receive support from that quarter.²¹³ Certainly if he could have been assured of the support of the Catholic population, the deficit of 400 votes which O'Neill reported to Butt, would have been made up by receiving support from the Protestants on the Rossmore estates. Presumably Lewis discovered that he would not receive the unequivocal support of the Rossmores, and this, coupled with the threat to the Catholic powerbase posed by McMahon determined him not to come forward at this time. In an editorial on the election in the Northern Standard²¹⁴ the voice of the Conservative and Protestant segment of the population suggested that whoever had helped Lewis to draw up his address had done him a great disservice. His principles were the most Catholic of Catholic and the Standard suggested, 'he had made it, however, a religious contest.'²¹⁵ In any case, there was, if the Northern Standard was anything to go on, virtually no chance of Lewis receiving any Protestant votes.

²¹⁰ London Times, 8 July, 1871, p 10; Freeman's Journal, 7 July, 1871, p 3.

²¹¹ Dio (RC) 1/11A/19, 8 July, 1871, Donnelly to Lewis.

²¹² Northern Standard, 8 July, 1871, p 1. A copy is also retained in Clogher Diocesan Archive, see Dio (RC) 1/11A/6.

²¹³ Freeman's Journal, 7 July, 1871, p 3.

²¹⁴ Northern Standard, 8 July, 1871, p 1.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

While McMahon attempted to pressurise Lewis into withdrawing by sitting quietly, the press turned its attention towards two major candidates, Leslie and Madden. Leslie, as a Conservative candidate, did not have to treat with the Catholic bishop to any great extent. On 3 July he had written to Donnelly to inform him that he had been asked to come forward as a candidate for the vacancy and that he should have,

. . . waited on you in person to solicit your vote and interest but find it quite out of my power to do so at present - I therefore trust that in consideration of the circumstances in which I am placed you will excuse me doing so.

216

The uniqueness of this is that Leslie was the only prospective candidate who did not ask for Donnelly's aid. He said that he would have waited upon him to secure his vote but that he could not. He does not continue that he still requires his vote. This is also the only correspondence between the two of them; nor is there any evidence that any of Leslie's aides were in contact with the Bishop at a later date. Presumably Leslie felt secure enough by 3 July, not to require the aid of the hierarchy which anyway would not be forthcoming. He had declared as the Conservative candidate and his certainty perhaps comes from a feeling of assurance that Madden would not be able to get the Orange vote and that he, with the Protestant and loyalist vote safely delivered was all but elected the future representative for the county of Monaghan.

Initially, a Captain Candy had intimated that he would be coming forward as the Conservative candidate.²¹⁷ However, either of the Leslie brothers had also been suggested. On 1 July an advertisement placed in the Northern Standard, and signed by William Swan, who acted as one of the Conservative agents, stated that a Conservative candidate would come before the people shortly. When he did, Captain Candy quickly gave way. Leslie's address was short and to the point. He stated that he had been requested by many friends to come forward and had agreed. He added,

The Principles of my family are long known to you, and if returned by you it will be my endeavour to promote the Interests of the

216 Dio (RC) 1/11A/13, Leslie to Donnelly, 3 July, 1871.

217 Northern Standard, 1 July, 1871, p 1.

Empire at large, and of Ireland in particular, and contribute to the welfare of our County in every way in my power. 218

Leslie's address was sufficient. There could hardly have been an elector in Monaghan who did not know the political convictions of the family. He could expect the large numbers of tenantry upon his own estate to vote for him, as well as those on many of the other major properties. Madden was at a disadvantage in so far as he was the only landlord in the county to have endorsed Home Rule. The stance of the Rossmore family for example, was indicated on Saturday, 8 July, when Leslie and the Rossmore agent, Colonel Lloyd toured Monaghan town, which was on the Rossmore estate, to canvass for the Conservative interest.²¹⁹

The response to Madden's meeting in Clones was mixed. The Freeman's Journal blamed the people of Monaghan for not giving Butt the degree of support he needed to persuade him to come forward. It then continued that not one of the candidates then before the electors was really satisfactory. Lewis was young, popular, Catholic and Liberal, but was he equal to the task? McMahon has issued no address or made any sign. As for Madden, he had done nothing but issue an odd manifesto,

which was as suitable to the inhabitants of the Islands of Arran as those of Monaghan. We know the gent to be an Orangeman, and he affects Home Rule. Our readers will remember that some twenty months ago he travelled to Dublin, and made an affidavit to the effect that the place would be wholly smashed if the Cabra demonstration on behalf of an amnesty to the political prisoners were permitted. 220

This report, erroneously claiming that Madden was an Orangeman, and reminding everyone of his actions at the time of the Cabra meeting, was followed three days later by an editorial which summed up the fears of the Liberals.²²¹ This time the writer claimed that Madden had not

218 Ibid, 8 July, 1871, p 1.

219 Ibid.

220 Freeman's Journal, 8 July, 1871, p 3.

221 The report also claimed that Madden had been High Sheriff in Monaghan in 1869 when the jury was dismissed, and that he had been removed. This erroneous statement indicated a complete ignorance of Monaghan on the part of the Freeman. This was something the Northern Standard made much of; see Northern Standard, 15 July, 1871, p 1.

changed his views and was only adding Home Rule in a crude form to his political beliefs. He was the only alternative to Leslie, but was he to be trusted? In conclusion the article claimed,

Pending the achievement of Home Rule, he goes into Parliament, or we are deceived, as a full-blooded Orangeman, and no constituency in Ireland has better reason to know what a full-blooded Orangeman symbolises than the constituency of Monaghan.²²²

The Conservative Dublin Evening Mail took a different stance on Madden. It pointed out that once Gladstone decided to treat Ireland differently, a reference to the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, it was bound to lead to something new. This was the Home Government Association. As to the candidates for Monaghan, the Mail dismissed Lewis as a reactionary ultramontanist.²²³ Leslie stood on old principles of constitutionalism. However, much had changed since these principles won Monaghan in 1868. Madden, on the other hand, had boldly raised the new banner in Monaghan. It was,

. . . a token of change which Englishmen must begin to ponder upon, discarding the levity what considers Gladstonianism supreme . . . the feeling is growing in Ireland in favour of administrative decentralisation to a greater or lesser extent, on one or another plain . . .

224

The Dublin Daily Mail was not the representative of all Conservative opinion. The Dublin Daily Express, for example, in an editorial on 12 July stated that an Orange Federalist was a contradiction in terms. The voters of Monaghan had to choose between loyalty and order on the one hand, and Ribbonism and sedition on the other.²²⁵ It then continued that Madden was not an Orangeman, and as his brother was the County Master that there must be one major reason why he never joined. The implication being that Madden had always been in favour of Home Rule. With regard to Flanagan, the Express said that he was copying the worst precedents of the Roman Catholic priesthood, 'to become a pulpit canvasser.'

222 Ibid, 11 July, 1871, p 2.

223 Dublin Evening Mail, 11 July, 1871, p 2.

224 Ibid.

225 TCD, 1710/48, Cutting Dublin Daily Express, 12 July, 1871.

With the Protestant population so divided as to the new movement and whether or not it should be supported, and as the Catholic population was in a similarly ambivalent position, it was no wonder that Bishop Donnelly should feel himself in a very difficult position. However, if Donnelly had any inclination to support Madden, other parties were determined that this should never occur. Early in the campaign Donnelly received a letter from O'Hagan, the Lord Chancellor.²²⁶ Further correspondence was also undertaken, but due to O'Hagan's official position he felt it wise to do so through an intermediary. To this end he had a Mr Lentaigne, a Commissioner of Education and a personal friend of the Chancellor's to correspond, and also Patrick Joseph Keenan, a Commissioner of National Education, and perhaps also, O'Hagan's secretary, to write to Donnelly. In this way, O'Hagan's views were ably conveyed to the Bishop. O'Hagan had recently been appointed the first Catholic Lord Chancellor of Ireland by Gladstone, and he was very much in favour of a Catholic and a Gladstonite claiming the seat. As the candidates showed themselves, O'Hagan was to throw his support behind John McMahon of Carrickmacross.

O'Hagan's first letter is not preserved, but Donnelly's draft of his reply is.²²⁷ In it he spoke mostly of Home Rule, and it is clear that it was the chances of success for a Home Ruler which had troubled O'Hagan most, whilst he had also questioned the authenticity of John Madden's conversion to the new movement. Donnelly's reply gives us some indication of his own views, but more importantly, it indicates also how well he understood the political realities of his diocese. He wrote,

Whether Madden's conversion be only skin deep or prove a thorough and fruitful one I cannot predict but time will tell. I cd candidly assure yr Ldsp that HR seems to be very near the hearts of the people & nothing keeps them aloof from the present movement save the bad character of the men who have inaugurated it. 228

This was a shrewd observation, because it was to become quite clear that the Protestant and Tory veneer which Home Rule acquired at its commencement was the deciding feature in the reticence of the Catholic

226 See below, pp 259-62.

227 Dio (RC) 1/11A/30, Donnelly to O'Hagan, undated draft.

228 Ibid.

population as a whole to support it. And there is little doubt that the 'bad character' of those involved was a reference to their political and more especially, their religious backgrounds.

Madden's address appeared on 10 July, and was well along traditional Home Rule lines. His brother and Flanagan could do all in their power to secure the Orange vote. The tenantry on his own estate could also be expected to support him. In addition, some nationalists within the Catholic community would vote for him. And as Donnelly had agreed not to oppose him, it began to appear that Monaghan might be captured by the Home Rulers. On 11 July Madden wrote again to Donnelly thanking him for his 'kind and generous confidence.' He pointed out that the landlords had combined against him and this meant presumably that they would support Leslie. From Madden's point of view this meant that it was now essential that he received, "the cordial material aid of yourself and your clergy - no half-hearted support will avail me - Landlord influence will otherwise neutralise or turn against me many of your people contrary to their own wishes."²²⁹ Madden believed that many Protestants would vote for him, and those who would not vote for him, were not prepared to go against him. Thus, he appealed to the Bishop on the grounds that the campaign was so evenly balanced that Donnelly was able, ". . . under these circumstances to return me if you think me worthy of your confidence."²³⁰ Donnelly seems to have surprised even the Home Rulers by his sympathy for Madden. Thus Madden again approached him hoping for an even greater degree of support.

On July 12, there was an Orange service in Killeevan Church, the parish of Rev Flanagan. He once again made a virulent anti-British speech. He took as his text for the sermon, Jeremiah, Chapter Five, verse nine:- "Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord: and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this." The actual sermon itself is not recorded but Chapter Five prophesied how God's vengeance should come down upon Israel for her past sins. The nation which forgets about God tastes His vengeance. The reference requires no explanation.

229 Dio (RC) 1/11A/25, Madden to Donnelly, 11 July, 1871.

230 Ibid.

The Orangemen applauded Flanagan's sentiments and his sermon made quite a stir, as might be expected. On 14 July, the London Times carried an editorial about Flanagan and also the relationship of Orangeism to Home Rule. And although throughout the rest of the country Home Rule was not as popular with the Orangemen as it was in Monaghan,²³¹ there was still a good chance that John Madden would be returned.

The Freeman's Journal also carried a lengthy report of Flanagan's sermon. He blamed the English parliament for being 'perjured, corrupt and abominable.'²³² The reason he advocated Home Rule was because of the sins of England, primarily the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, Catholic emancipation, and the absence of the Bible from the schools. Finally, the Freeman claimed that Flanagan had stated that it was the priests who made the Party Processions Act. It is unclear whether or not Flanagan really said everything attributed to him. After all, the Freeman's Journal had garbled his 'Queen's Crown' speech. It is possible that the newspaper was willing to stretch the truth to some extent. In any case, it came to the conclusion that Flanagan's rhetoric showed,

. . . how impossible it is for devout Catholics, proud of an attachment of the good old faith, to unite for any purpose with a body whose leading men show by their words that they would if they were able to rear again in Ireland the accursed, infamous, and bloodstained juggernaut of Ascendancy. 233

The motives of the Freeman's Journal are clear. They were to discredit the Home Government Association. The journal was, after all, very close to the Catholic hierarchy. Thus the attitudes of the hierarchy as to what was best for Catholic Ireland found a responsive chord in the columns of the paper. At this time the bishops, and especially Cardinal Cullen, were opposed to the Home Government Association whilst there was a chance that Gladstone would come across with denominational education. Thus the Freeman's Journal, in an attempt to discourage Monaghan Catholics from supporting Madden gave great publicity to the utterances of Flanagan.

231 See above pp 224-8.

232 Freeman's Journal, 11 July, 1871, p 4.

233 Ibid, and London Times, 12 July, 1871, p 5.

Where Madden's campaign came to grief was not vis-a-vis the Protestant community or due to the disapproval of the Landlords, it came from the reaction of the Catholic community towards him. Up to the 12 July Donnelly would appear to have been reasonably sympathetic to Madden, and he was quite willing to give Madden's people his pledge not to oppose the Home Rule campaign. However, on 12th Donnelly received a reply to a letter he had written to P J Keenan who was the Lord Chancellor's secretary.²³⁴ He pointed out that O'Hagan had had a letter from McMahon notifying him of his cordial reception by the Bishop. Keenan claimed that O'Hagan felt that Donnelly had endorsed McMahon, and that with the Orange vote split between Madden and Leslie

the Catholic vote would see McMahon home. This appeared most satisfactory to Keenan until he received Donnelly's letter on 12 July. The letter clearly perplexed Keenan because he wrote, "I read it over three times and have been cogitating upon it all day." The depth of antipathy felt by O'Hagan is surprising. Keenan continued,

On Sunday the Chancellor, over and over again, said that he would infinitely prefer the return of Leslie to that of Madden. He looked at it as horrible to have anything to say to a man whose antecedents have been so disgraceful. He thought he could not hold his head up when next he met Gladstone, Fortescue etc. who had risked so much in boldly - - - Madden last year, if you my dear Lord, or any Catholic of the county - - - a part in his election - I quite agreed with the Chancellor - Old Nick himself would have been preferable . . . The impossibility of a Catholic aiding Madden is the conviction of everyone.

235

The intense emotions which this letter indicates the name of Madden provoked in the Lord Chancellor is quite surprising. Clearly Madden was complete anathema to O'Hagan. Presumably this was because of Madden's protest at the breaking of the PPA by the Amnesty March, and also his refusal to accept the Lord Lieutenantship of Leitrim. Whereas Madden may be said to have lost his confrontation with the government and its legal representatives in Ireland by his dismissal from all official posts, the controversy had embarrassed the government quite considerably and O'Hagan had become the target for a significant amount of Protestant antagonism. He had moved with exceptional speed

²³⁴ Dio (RC) 1/11A/29, Patrick Joseph Keenan to Donnelly, 12 July, 1871.

²³⁵ Ibid.

against Madden to remove him from his positions as Commissioner of the Peace. Madden had also grossly insulted Gladstone's government to which O'Hagan quite naturally felt a tremendous gratitude for the honour which had been conferred upon him.

There may have been more to O'Hagan's reaction than the hatred he obviously felt for John Madden who had complicated the first few months of his new appointment. O'Hagan would appear to have been committed to McMahon. This man, the dark horse on the Liberal side had had the support of Keenan in his letter of 12 July. He was a lawyer, and possibly a friend of O'Hagan. His correspondence with Donnelly indicated that he was willing to support an orthodox Catholic line. For example, he had written to Donnelly on 7 July to thank him for supporting his candidature.²³⁶ Then the following day he wrote that he would abide by any decision which the bishop should make,²³⁷ stating that he would not dream of contesting the seat unless he had the full support of the clergy of the county. Donnelly must have replied to the first telegram on 7 July, because on 9 July McMahon again sent a telegram to the effect that he would be in the county the next day and that Donnelly should arrange for the clergy to come and hear him.²³⁸ He had delayed presumably because he feared that Donnelly was committed to Lewis, but now that Lewis had announced his retirement McMahon felt that he was secure enough to approach a canvass of the constituency.

Donnelly was quite shaken by this letter from Keenan because he immediately sat down and wrote to O'Hagan to explain his actions. Since the retirement of Lewis, Donnelly no longer had to worry about offending Cullen's 'pet candidate.' However, it is clear that O'Hagan was committed to McMahon. It was, for example, McMahon who informed the Lord Chancellor of the Bishop's pledge not to oppose Madden. Donnelly explained that with Lewis having retired from the contest, McMahon never having really entered it, it appeared that Leslie would have a walk-over.

236 Dio (RC) 1/11A/17, Telegraph McMahon to Donnelly, 7 July, 1871.

237 Dio (RC) 1/11A/21, McMahon to Donnelly, 8 July, 1871.

238 Dio (RC) 1/11A/27, Telegraph McMahon to Donnelly, 9 July, 1871.

To support him all the Tory Landlords of the Co were bunched together, joined by the rotten Rossmores - and all were for a whole week canvassing in his favour. When Lo a deputation arrived to assure me that Madden would stand if only I assured that I would not oppose him, I had then the prospect of a glorious row among the rascals, of driving in a wedge and creating a split in the Tory ranks both now and for the future . . . all on the easy terms of not supporting any other candidate when to all appearances I had no other to support.

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Besides, Donnelly continued, the Catholics could not return a Liberal on their own. Only Lord Cremorne could have won the contest due to the fact that he could command a large number of Protestant Liberal votes. Butt, McMahon and Lewis could not be returned as they would appeal to only the Catholics.

O'Hagan must then have dispatched Lentaigne to Monaghan to discuss the election with the bishop, for Donnelly wrote again to O'Hagan the following day, as a result of a discussion he had had with Lentaigne. He had as his mission the task of informing Donnelly just how opposed the Catholic Whigs were to the Madden candidacy. Donnelly thus felt obliged to write to the Lord Chancellor that irrespective of how Madden was regarded elsewhere, that in Monaghan he was looked upon purely as an advocate of Home Rule. He then asserted that,

He is not and never was strictly an Orangeman - that he has latterly changed very much for the better in many respects as the clergy in his neighbourhood admit . . . Madden has pledged himself "behind backs" to his Catholic supporters that no vote of his, if returned, will be given against the interests of his Catholic fellow-countrymen. To be sure he is supported by some rabid Orangemen and he cannot fully fraternise with Catholics.²⁴⁰

Once again, it is obvious that the reaction of the Whigs surprised Donnelly; thus he had to defend Madden to defend himself. It is surprising to see the 'behind backs' pledge, and this indicates a shrewdness on Madden's part. Presumably this deal was what induced Donnelly not to oppose Madden and possibly to support him. Madden must have realised that once he was elected then he could stand or fall upon his behaviour in parliament. As a member of the Home Rule party which was gaining strength he would be in a good position. The Ballot Act which would come into force for the next general election would give the

239 Dio (RC) 1/11A/28, Undated draft, Donnelly to O'Hagan.

240 Dio (RC) 1/11A/26, Draft, Donnelly to O'Hagan.

Catholics a decided majority upon the electoral register; thus Madden would require not to have voted against the interests of his Catholic fellow countrymen. Donnelly concluded with a warning to O'Hagan, "I feel there is no use denying it that if any decent man or body of men took up the cry for Home Rule the great body of the people would follow - nothing but the complexion of the present Home Rule Association keeps them aloof from it."²⁴¹

And here was the central issue as far as any nationalist inclined bishop was concerned. His personal preference was for a national dimension in the government of Ireland. Similarly, he was quite clear in his own mind that the very vast majority of the Catholic people of his diocese were in favour of Home Rule. It was true that they were unsure of some of the members of the Home Government Association. Nevertheless, it remained to be seen whether or not this would be a significant factor in the casting of votes, even if the secret ballot was not yet in operation. It was possible that a Catholic bishop in a constituency like Monaghan could advocate support for a Catholic liberal and have enough of his people vote for a Home Ruler as to underline the limits of his influence. These were all issues which Donnelly had to consider, and he came to his decision with the aid of correspondents like Callan and O'Hagan.

While all this manoeuvring was taking place behind closed doors, the constituency was going about the process of the democratic selection of a replacement for Charles Powell Leslie. By 14 July the Freeman's Journal had virtually endorsed the candidature of John McMahon. It reported upon a meeting in Carrickmacross which it stated was large and enthusiastic. It added, "Madden was here, but did not show, and left town by a back entrance."²⁴² If the paper was to be believed, McMahon was very much in the ascendancy at present. So pleased was he at his reception in Carrickmacross that he wrote to Donnelly that the clergy and the people were completely behind him.²⁴³ And so as to take away from Madden's political connection as best he could, towards the end of

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Freeman's Journal, 14 July, 1871, p 3.

²⁴³ Dio (RC) 1/11A/27, McMahon to Donnelly, 14 July, 1871.

his campaign McMahon added Home Rule and the improvement of the 1870 Land Act to his political principles.²⁴⁴

A final blow to Madden's campaign came from an unexpected source. Father O'Malley, who had written of Madden in such glowing terms at the start of the campaign felt that if the Home Rule candidate had any chance at all he would need the complete support of the Catholic population. To this end, O'Malley issued an Address to the Catholic Electors of Monaghan.²⁴⁵ This document provoked a strong reaction from Cardinal Cullen. So strong, in fact, that it was enough to finish off the candidate's chances. The address calling upon the Catholics of Monaghan to support Madden had appeared on 7 July. It was drawn to the attention of the Cardinal some eight days later, and he immediately wrote to Donnelly explaining in no uncertain terms that O'Malley was not a representative of the Dublin clergy and that Cullen did not hold the same political views. After referring to the fact that O'Malley commenced his ecclesiastical career in Philadelphia, and had been obliged to quit that mission on account of troubles with the Bishop,²⁴⁶ he continued that O'Malley should not be encouraging the Catholics of another diocese, "to go against the wishes of all the Bishops of Ireland, by giving up for the present their claims for Catholic denominational schools."²⁴⁷ He concluded with the denunciation of the HGA, that 'a bad tree cannot produce good fruit.' In this way Cullen also expressed his personal view that Madden and Home Rule were unacceptable to the church on both political and religious grounds. The phrase 'all the Bishops of Ireland' which he used, suggests that Cullen wanted Donnelly to realise that it would be unwise for him to go out on a limb for Madden.

If the letter itself is illuminating, an enclosure which Cullen wanted Donnelly to read and then destroy also deserves mention. In the envelope with the letter ~~was a small~~ scrap of paper which read,

244 London Times, 17 July, 1871, p 8.

245 See above, p 249.

246 Dio (RC) 1/11A/32, Cullen to Donnelly, 15 July, 1871.

247 Ibid.

Private

Seeing O'Malley's impudent address I thought it well to write the few accompanying lines - I will put Mr O'Malley out of the way (sic) of doing any more mischief.

248

This letter must have destroyed all chance Madden might have had of receiving material aid from Donnelly. To Donnelly's relief, on Saturday, 15 July, two days before nomination day, Madden retired from the contest. Cullen had clearly written in haste upon 15th, so on the following day he again wrote to the Bishop. This time the tone was more measured. Perhaps he had heard from O'Hagan Donnelly's views of 14th, when he had stated that Home Rule was in the hearts of the people, because Cullen wrote that he hoped that his letter would not do mischief. He then admitted, "I know nothing about the feelings of the people, and without wishing to do so, I might have written something to offend."²⁴⁹ This was somewhat of a step back from his tone of the previous day, but upon the author of the address Cullen had not relented. In a postscript he wrote,

I dare say Father O'Malley will deny the authorship of the address. It would be well to be able to convict him of having written it.

250

Donnelly received Cullen's letter on Monday, 17th, and its less agitated tone coupled with Madden's retirement from the contest, eased Donnelly out of a difficult situation.²⁵¹

The effect of Madden's reception in Carrickmacross must have had a telling effect upon him. On 15 July he wrote to Donnelly announcing that he was going to retire from the contest. The tone of the letter makes it clear that Madden felt that he had had the support of both Donnelly and the Catholic clergy. The major reason why he had decided to retire was that in the barony of Farney, an area which according to

248 Ibid.

249 Dio (RC) 1/11A/33, Cullen to Donnelly, 16 July, 1871.

250 Ibid.

251 Dio (RC) 1/11A/34, Cullen to Donnelly, 16 July, 1871.

the Census of Ireland for 1861 was 93.54% Catholic, his canvassers all reported back in 'very unsatisfactory terms.'²⁵² He continued that great distrust and ill-feeling existed in this part of the county. The Home Rule supporters in the southern and western parts of the county had obviously had little or no success in persuading the Catholics of that area to support a Protestant Home Ruler. According to Madden there was also in Farney, "a likelihood of creating a split between some of your clergy and the people."²⁵³ This statement is difficult to assess. It indicates that either Madden and his Home Rule supporters were so out of touch with the political realities of the area that they wrongly believed the curates and priests in Farney to be in favour of his candidacy, or else Donnelly, or at least a substantial number of his clergy, had committed themselves to the Home Rule cause.

From the Protestant districts Madden reported that there was a feeling that he was, "merely being made a tool of designing parties for the purpose of putting out both Mr Leslie and myself by splitting the Protestant vote and so returning Mr McMahon on a side-wind."²⁵⁴ Sectarian animosities had been stirred up, which he termed the curse of Irish politics and parties, and this he said would not help the Home Rule cause. The fear of arousing sectarianism was so great that Madden felt that it might destroy any chance he might have at the general election. Finally, Madden asked Donnelly to assure his priests and his people that it was not due to lukewarmness that he had decided not to stand, and also that he did not retire in favour of Mr Leslie. If McMahon had retired he would have polled the county to the last man. And perhaps in this statement we see the reason for O'Hagan's encouragement of McMahon even after being assured by Donnelly that he had no chance. In a letter written by the Lord Chancellor to the Bishop after the election he expressed his satisfaction that Leslie had been elected and not Madden.²⁵⁵ Without McMahon, Madden probably would have defeated Leslie in a straight fight.

252 Dio (RC) 1/11A/31, Madden to Donnelly, 15 July, 1871.

253 Ibid.

254 Ibid.

255 Dio (RC) 1/11A/35, O'Hagan to Donnelly

On 17 July, prior to the news reaching the London Times, that paper reported that Madden was not going to receive the support of the Orange voters. In addition, it stated that the Catholics could not forgive his attempt to have the Cabra meeting banned.²⁵⁶ And although Madden had already retired by this date, the Times fairly summed up the problem which the Madden campaign faced. The Dublin Evening Mail reported that Madden had retired and that a member of the Home Government Association in Monaghan was trying to get someone else to address the county.²⁵⁷ The Freeman's Journal, for its part, reported that Madden had retired because McMahon had added Home Rule to his address. It continued,

There is some dissatisfaction expressed at Mr Madden's retirement, as it was considered that, as a home rule candidate he had a fair chance of success. The Catholic bishop and clergy will not interfere. 258

The report concluded that Butt was approached to contest the election now that Madden was no longer in the field. Similarly, Bishop Donnelly in his diary wrote that, "Madden retires - Butt offers but rejected."

These two pieces of information indicate that once Madden had decided not to contest the seat that there had been an immediate approach to Butt from the Home Rulers in Monaghan or vice versa. That is, either the Home Rule organisation was so keen to have a candidate in the Monaghan contest that it immediately requested Butt to place his name before the electors, or else that he had been waiting in the wings all the time. The bishop's diary on the other hand, suggests that Butt made the offer but that it was refused by the Monaghan Home Rulers. It is unlikely that it will ever be known whether Butt was biding his time awaiting Madden to retire. If that were the case then it would be clear that Butt had used the Freeman's Journal to good measure in stirring up Catholic discontent at Madden's candidacy. If not, then Butt's emergence was simply an expedient. This would seem unlikely as Butt believed that a straight sectarian vote would go against him. And he was desperately short of funds in the summer of 1871.

256 London Times, 17 July, 1871, p 8.

257 Dublin Evening Mail, 17 July, 1871, p 2.

258 Freeman's Journal, 17 July, p 3.

Madden's decision not to contest the seat left the local organisation very little time to choose a successor. Nomination day was to be Monday, 17 July. It took place in the Court House in Monaghan town. At 10 o'clock am the High Sheriff of the county, Edward Richardson of Poplar Vale arrived with the Sub-Sheriff, William Mitchell.²⁵⁹ The nomination then took place. John Leslie, the Conservative candidate was proposed by a J P named James Hamilton. He had been chosen to propose Leslie because thirty years previously, when Charles Powell Leslie first went forward for the county, Hamilton had been his seconder. This ploy made it clear that John Leslie would carry on the work commenced by his brother, and indicated that there was no friction between the original backers of his brother and himself. Leslie was seconded by Major Henry Lloyd. Lloyd was the agent on the Rossmore estate and, as Donnelly's correspondence indicated,²⁶⁰ Rossmore was now backing Leslie for the seat.

McMahon was proposed by Mr Peter McPhillips of Monaghan town and this was seconded by Thomas Daly of Ballybay. Then Mr William McPhillips of Scotstown proposed Isaac Butt. McPhillips made a long speech attacking landlordism which was often interrupted. Butt's nomination was seconded by Peter Tierney of Monaghan town. He claimed that if Butt was returned that within three years all denominations would be linked together.

Leslie spoke about the death of his brother to a background of cheers and shouts of 'He was a good landlord.' And there can be no doubt but that in the eyes of the Protestants of Monaghan Charles Powell Leslie was almost without equal. Leslie's speech was brief but telling. He pointed out that he was a Conservative and that he would devote himself completely to the task of being their representative if elected. With regard to the Home Rule web, he would not discuss its philosophy,

That doctrine had been expounded to them by abler men than he was. They had heard its principles during the last week, and they were themselves the best judges of its merits; and as far as he could understand they had shown how fully they understood them by refusing to support their representative. (Cheers). Had it

²⁵⁹ See above, p 186.

²⁶⁰ Northern Standard, 22 July, 1871, p 1.

not been for this decision on its merits, he had no doubt they should have had another name than that of Mr Butt's proposed to represent those principles.

261

Leslie sat down to prolonged cheers and was followed by McMahon who was booed on his coming forward, and whose speech was, 'frequently interrupted by humorous and applicable remarks.' McMahon stated that he was not coming forward on this occasion, but at the next election which would be fought under the secret ballot he would poll the county to the last man.

At this point McPhillips requested a poll on behalf of Mr Butt. The Sheriff pointed out that if Butt had not authorised him to do so that he would personally be responsible for the costs. At this point a Captain Dunne, a minor official of the Home Government Association stated that he was Butt's agent and that he was authorised by Butt to demand a poll. A poll was then declared necessary by the Sheriff and polling was set for Thursday, 20 July.

The Freeman's Journal noted that Madden had been present at the nomination and that he had given his reasons for not contesting the county as the seeming support given to McMahon by the barony of Farney. It also pointed out that Westenra was there supporting Leslie, and that Cremorne would have been forgiven his votes on the disestablishment question if he had supported the views of the Bishop of Clogher on the education question. However, he did not.²⁶²

The question was now whether or not Madden and his supporters would back Isaac Butt. It was possible that the Protestants amongst Madden's supporters would see his forced retirement and the re-emergence of Butt as yet another example of Catholic church manipulation. The Evening Telegraph reported that as most of the Liberal Home Rulers had decided to support Madden, the question was now whether Madden would support Butt. If he did, then the Liberal Home Rulers would also support Butt and he would be elected.²⁶³

261 Ibid.

262 Freeman's Journal, 18 July, 1981, p 4.

263 Report from London Evening Telegraph, cited in ibid, 19 July, 1871, p 5.

On Wednesday, 19 July, Madden went to Enniskillen where Butt was engaged in conducting a case for Mr Porter, a leading Liberal landlord. Madden 'tendered him his warmest support,' and promised to lead as many of his tenants as would follow him to the poll to vote for Home Rule. Butt, for his part, announced to a Freeman's Journal reporter that he was amazed when he arrived in Ireland to discover that he had been nominated for Monaghan. However, as 'he just happened to be in the vicinity,' he would accept in an effort to stop further encroachment on Ulster Tenant Right.²⁶⁴

Not only did the Butt campaign not gain the support of the Monaghan Orangemen, it was also guaranteed to alienate the conservative element within the Home Government Association. For one thing, Butt fought the election on the tenant right issue. His election poster carried the slogans,

E L E C T O R S

O F

M O N A G H A N

V O T E F O R

I S A A C B U T T

Defender of the People

THE ADVOCATE OF HOME RULE

The Defender of Ulster Tenant Right

A N D

A L L I R I S H R I G H T S

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This was a clear rebuttal to his own arguments that Home Rule and Home Rule alone should be the platform. In fact, Home Rule candidates generally addressed constituencies on a number of issues, but Home Rule should always have been the foremost. This was true with Madden's address, but when Butt canvassed the county he hardly mentioned Home Rule at all. Indeed, the Times correspondent noted, ". . . Mr Butt, the chief oracle of Home Rule, has not thought it prudent to use this principle in his address."²⁶⁶

²⁶⁴ Ibid, 20 July, 1871, p 3.

²⁶⁵ CSORP 1871 13837.

²⁶⁶ London Times, 20 July, 1871, p 9.

There was little time for a canvass of the county by either Leslie or Butt. Important from Butt's point of view was Madden's endorsement of him. This meant, in effect, that the Madden tenantry would mostly poll for the father of Home Rule. On the other hand, it was clear that Butt would have great difficulty in persuading the Orangemen of Monaghan in general to support him. He had accused Coote and Mitchell of jury-packing. As a result, both men had been dismissed from their positions. He had defended McKenna, the man who had shot James Clarke. Here again, he had been successful in having the justice which the Protestants felt to be his proper reward frustrated. The McKenna case was as big an affront to the rank and file Orangeman as was the removal of Coote and Mitchell to their social superiors. Nevertheless, Butt's position was not hopeless. Rev O'Neill had assured him that the Catholics were only in a minority on the electoral register of around 400. Thus if all Catholics voted for Butt, as there could be little doubt they would, then all Madden had to do was deliver 200 Protestant votes to the Home Rule cause to even up the vote.²⁶⁷ Further, Madden and Butt probably both believed that many Protestants would abstain. So even if Butt's past career in county Monaghan made him just too unpalatable for many Protestant voters, there was the hope that in deference to John Madden that they would not cast their votes for Leslie. Unlike the 1868 election when the Grand Lodge instructed the county lodges to inform all Orangemen that they had to vote for the Conservative candidates, there was no official response to the election from the Monaghan Orangemen. The County Grand Lodge had met in May, 1871, before there was any knowledge of an impending by-election in the county. It would have been possible for Flanagan to persuade the Grand Lodge to issue instructions, but the movement was probably split between Leslie and John Madden. The fact that the lodge did not meet and instruct Orangemen to vote Tory may be indicative of a battle won by Flanagan and the Home Rulers within the movement in Monaghan. Their position would have been stronger if William Madden had been present in the county throughout the period. However, he had been incarcerated in England until May, 1871 when

²⁶⁷ In fact, Madden brought 300 electors to Monaghan town from his property, all of whom voted for Butt. On a straight sectarian count this should have given Butt a majority of 200. See Northern Standard, 29 July, 1871, p 1.

he decided to go to Canada. His health was deteriorating by this time, and he took no active part either in Monaghan politics or Orangeism after his arrest in 1870. This deprived John Madden of his most valuable ally in Protestant politics in the county.

Polling was fairly brisk. There was a total electorate in Monaghan in 1871 of 5,623.²⁶⁸ And of these, 3,989 voted, or 70.94%. In the period from the Longford county by-election on 10 May, 1870 until the Kerry county election of February, 1872, the Home Government Association contested six county by-elections. Using the figure for 1871 for each county's electorate, we find the following:²⁶⁹

Date	County	Result	Total Voting	Total Eligible	% Voting	HR % of Vote cast
16/5/'70	Longford	HR 1217 L 923	2140	2786	76.81	56.87
18/8/'70	City of Dublin	L 4468 HR 3444	7912	12899	61.34	43.53
17/1/'71	Meath	Nat 1140 L 684	1824	4179	43.65	62.50
22/7/'71	Monaghan	C 2538 HR 1451	3989	5623	70.94	36.38
8/2/'72	Galway	HR 2823 C 658	3481	5349	65.08	81.10
6/2/'72	Kerry	HR 2237 L 1398	3635	5450	66.70	61.54

This table indicates that the turn out in county Monaghan was above average. It is also clear from the final column that Isaac Butt's campaign in Monaghan was the poorest showing that any Home Government Association candidate made during the first two years of elections. This indicates the disquiet felt within the county at the way in which Madden had been treated. If the Home Rule journals had supported Madden, particularly the influential Freeman's Journal, then it is entirely possible that he would have remained in the contest. With the support

268 Walker, Irish Electorate, Table 5, p 381.

269 This table has been compiled from Walker, Parliamentary Election Results in Ireland, pp 113-114, and his, 'Irish Electorate,' p 381. Because of the small size of the borough electorates only Dublin City has been included.

of the Catholic clergy he could have been able to appeal to the electors of Farney. After all, he was being opposed by all the Tory landlords. Thus Shirley must have been against him. But the pressure upon public opinion exerted by the Freeman's Journal, coupled with the pressure placed upon Bishop Donnelly of Clogher by both Cardinal Cullen and the Lord Chancellor proved too much for Madden's campaign to withstand. Thus Butt came forward and was defeated easily.

The breakdown of the county voting was as follows:²⁷⁰

	Monaghan	Carrickmacross	Castleblayney
Butt	459	581	406
Leslie	1736	104	706

When these figures are computed in percentages of the vote cast, we find that Butt received 20.91% of the votes in Monaghan, 84.82% of the votes in Carrickmacross and 36.51% of the votes in Castleblayney. This indicates just how the county's political/sectarian divide was made up. Carrickmacross was, as expected, the centre of Buttite support. As the Freeman's Journal put it,

Scarcely a Catholic in Carrickmacross was absent from his post, and the priests of Farney were where the priests of the Irish people are ever sure to be, in the vanguard of those who were reasserting their allegiance to home and country. That allegiance of theirs is no newborn impulse - it is not the off spring of a suspected motive, but is the constant, the continued, and the unpurchasable devotion to the cause of a country which they have ever loved.

271

Stirring stuff, but the editorial missed the point that Madden could have taken a large percentage of the votes in the Protestant districts, and if the Freeman among others had advocated that the priests do half as much for Madden in Farney then the county would almost certainly have returned a Home Rule representative for an Ulster constituency for the first time since the Act of Union.

The Conservatives in Monaghan, as can be imagined, were delighted. They saw the result as a great vindication of time honoured constitutional

²⁷⁰ These figures come from the Northern Standard; they are pre-revision and are thus very slightly inaccurate.

²⁷¹ Freeman's Journal, 21 July, 1871, p 3.

principles. As the Northern Standard reported,

Home Rule demagogues have received a check which will, no doubt, prove a profitable lesson to them, and serve as an example for Ulster Constituencies in the future.

272

The defeat of Butt in Monaghan was a blow both to his personal prestige and to that of the Home Government Association. Madden had brought him enough Protestant votes for him to win the seat if he had received full support from the Catholics. This he did not receive, and apart from the Madden tenantry, it is unlikely that he received the votes of more than a handful of other Monaghan Protestants. The Monaghan result indicated that once again, a Protestant Nationalist would be unable to secure the support of the Catholic voters. The answer was either to further educate the Catholic segment to be more responsive to the appeals of erstwhile Conservatives who were now in the HGA, persuade the Protestants that their future prosperity lay with their Catholic fellow-citizens in an independently organised island, or else play the sectarian numbers game in those constituencies in which it would be a success. And as this would relate to the majority of the Irish seats, the Home Rule movement chose the third course. Protestant Nationalism would be all but dead by the next general election and Ireland would be rapidly approaching an even more complete sectarian divide along the national issue.

272 Northern Standard, 22 July, 1871, p 1.

CHAPTER V

'Would fight with energy if had a
proper candidate'

The Madden Campaign, 1874

The Freeman's Journal, the foremost spokesman of Catholic Ireland, was vociferous in its condemnation of the reaction of the Monaghan electors to Butt's campaign. It had been, from the start, unsure about the Home Government Association, suspecting the new nationalism of the Protestants. The difficulties which Madden had experienced in his canvass had to no small extent been the result of the reticence of such 'orthodox' Catholic agencies as the Freeman to support him. However, his sterling efforts on Butt's behalf on polling day were not unnoticed. It was the actions of his peers, the Orangemen and loyalists of the county which aroused the paper's anger. The Orange Order was lambasted for being unIrish, unnational, unrepentant and unrelenting; stating, ". . . it stands the foe to brotherly union, and will not echo the popular cry for the redemption of our common country. Orangeism has been tested in Monaghan, and has passed with the old disgrace through the trial that might have been the glory of its name."¹

The attitude of the journal was hardly fair. There was hardly a Home Ruler who would be less palatable to the county's Orangemen than Butt.² Nevertheless, it was true that the Orangemen had not supported the Nationalist candidate and to the Catholics of Ireland they could be seen not to have changed their attitude notwithstanding their bluster of three years previously. The Freeman continued,

¹ Freeman's Journal, 21 July, 1871, p 3.

² Butt's role in the defence of McMahon ensured that no Orangeman could consider supporting him. See above,

If the Orangemen of Ulster would act in the noble struggle as Mr Madden acted on yesterday, the contest for the prize would be very close indeed with an honesty of purpose, with an energy of action that speaks well for his sincerity in the cause he has adopted. Mr Madden was present in his booth at an early hour, and, leading with him in a cause that had the best sympathy of their souls, 300 of his tenantry, recorded his vote with theirs in behalf of the advocate of genuine tenant right and national legislation.

3

Madden had discovered that his great need was to be accepted by the nationalist people of Ireland - the Catholics. The campaign of 1871 had been a disappointment to him, and a revelation of just how little popular support his adopted views achieved for him. However, the attitude of the Freeman suggested that he had 'arrived' in national terms. This would augur well for the next electoral contest in Monaghan.

The Home Government Association had still made very little impact in Ulster. The activities of Flanagan, the Maddens and the rest of the Monaghan Orangemen had evoked considerable interest but Orange nationalists, albeit reacting against the same enemy as orthodox nationalists, were a very different breed. The nature of Ulster involvement within the HGA can be seen from the list of the Council elected at the first annual general meeting in June 1871.⁴ Of the 58 members of the Council only two were from Ulster; John Martin from Warrenpoint who could hardly be described as a typical Ulster Protestant, and John Madden. Madden, then, was the only Ulster Protestant (in terms of an ex-loyalist) to have joined the movement a year after its inception. There was, in addition, a small number of Ulster born Protestants within the movement, most noticeably Butt himself, the Rev J A Galbraith, both Donegal men, J J Dodd from Coleraine and Rev G McCutcheon. Lists of associate members are not available and it is possible that there was greater commitment from Ulster than the Council list suggests. However,

3 Freeman's Journal, 21 July, 1871, p 3.

4 Home Government Association, First Report, passed at a meeting, Held at the Rotunda, on Monday, 26 June, 1871: William Shaw MP in the Chair, with a List of the Council for the Year 1871-1872, (Dublin, 1871), pp 3-4.

5 In an attempt to broaden the power base for the new movement it had been decided in October 1870 to permit members of the Dublin trades unions to become associate members of the HGA on payment of one shilling as opposed to the usual method. For every 20 members the union got one regular place in the association.

so important did the new movement view the accession of prominent Ulster Protestants that it is likely that had there been a substantial commitment to Home Rule by such persons that they would have been placed upon the Council of the body.

The Monaghan result had been a set back for the Home Rulers, but it did not do irreparable damage. The quest to get Butt into parliament was completed in September of 1871 when he was returned unopposed for Limerick City. Now that the acclaimed leader of Home Rule was a Member of Parliament the movement should have gone from strength to strength. There was now a total of four Home Rule MPs who had been returned by the electors; Butt, John Martin for Meath, Mitchell Henry for Galway county and P J Smyth for county Westmeath. In addition, William Shaw MP for Bandon was at the Bilton's meeting and Phil Callan, county Louth along with George Ekins Browne of Mayo was a Charter member.⁶ And of perhaps even more significance than the election of Butt were the two by-election results in February 1872. In Galway Captain John Philip Nolan, a Home Ruler, was opposing Captain the Honourable William Le Poer Trench, a Conservative. The landocracy in the county, both Whig and Tory, united in opposition to Nolan but after a vigorous campaign Nolan was elected. He was fortunate in that he was supported by the local clergy, including Archbishop McHale of Tuam. The result from Galway where Nolan gained four times as many votes as Trench indicated the invincibility of Home Rule candidates when supported by the local Catholic hierarchy. Indeed, Nolan was so well supported that he was subsequently unseated on petition on account of undue clerical influence. The case was heard by Judge William Keogh and his summing up of the case infuriated Catholics. Keogh was burned in effigy throughout Ireland whilst the local HGA branches passed resolutions condemnatory of the decision.⁷ All of this furore tended to confirm Protestants in their belief that Home Rule and Catholicism were indelibly linked.⁸ Keogh had, after all, described

6 McCaffrey, Irish Federalism in the 1870s, p 19, n 22.

7 Thornley, Isaac Butt and Home Rule, p 131.

8 William Keogh, had been a leader of the ill-fated Tenant League and MP for Athlone 1847-1856. In 1854 John Sadleir, MP for Carlow and Keogh broke their party's pledge and took office in Lord Aberdeen's administration. See J H Whyte, The Independent Irish Party, Ch VIII. When Keogh became a judge there was considerable controversy over his appointment in Fenian trials, whilst in 1865 during a debate he again fell foul of the hierarchy because of the complexion placed upon one phrase. See E R Norman, Catholic Church and Ireland. p 195.

the election as 'the most astounding attempt at ecclesiastical tyranny which the whole history of priestly intolerance presents'.⁹ One conclusion above all others could be drawn and that was that a Catholic Home Rule candidate, supported by the local bishop and clergy would be victorious against a Tory or Whig in any constituency where Catholics formed the majority of the electoral register.

In county Kerry in another February by-election, the Home Rule candidate was Rowland Ponsonby Blennerhasset, a young Protestant landlord from Cahirciveen. He was opposed by James Arthur Dease, a prominent Catholic barrister. He was also a cousin of the outgoing MP, Lord Castlerosse who had recently acceded to the title Lord Kenmare. The Kenmares had held the seat for the preceding two decades, and as prominent Catholic landlords they expected to be supported by the electors when another member of the family was selected to contest the county. Dease was endorsed by the local gentry as well as Dr Moriarty. The clergy, on the other hand, were unhappy with Dease and supported Blennerhasset. As a result, he received 2237 votes to Dease's 1398.

These victories helped to cement the loose alliance around which Home Rule had grown up both at home and in London. The hand of the Home Rule MPs was further strengthened by the defection of three Irish Liberals to their ranks: Kenelm T Digby from Queen's county, the O'Connor Don of Roscommon, and Sir Rowland Blennerhasset of Galway City, a Catholic cousin of the Galway county MP. However, only Blennerhasset actually joined the Home Government Association.¹⁰

However, it was not all unqualified success in the political sphere. At Mallow in June, 1872 J G McCarthy was defeated by the Liberal whereas in November of that year Joseph Gillis Biggar, the Belfast pork merchant failed in an attempt to capture Londonderry City. The Mallow result was hardly a pointer to political attitudes within the island as there were only 169 votes cast with the Home Ruler losing by 14 votes.¹¹ In Derry the failure was of greater significance. It was fought under the Secret Ballot, the first Irish constituency to be contested under

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ McCaffrey, Irish Federalism in the 1870s, p 13.

¹¹ It was suggested at the time that McCarthy had been a government informer and that he had been directly responsible for the arrest of O'Donovan Rossa. This drew the rancour of the advanced party.

the measure. According to some contemporaries and many later chroniclers this measure was the panacea for all of Ireland's ills. It was the factor which ensured the independence of the voters and thus made the selection of nationalist and popular candidates instead of landlord nominees a real possibility.¹² However, the initial neutrality and later opposition of the local bishop and clergy ensured that the Home Rule candidate was defeated. What was amazing was the derisory number of votes which Biggar received: 89 out of a total 1,309 polled. The Conservative was returned with the key factor being the refusal of the Presbyterians to support a Catholic candidate of a party which was in favour of denominational education. There was no evidence of Orange support for the Home Ruler.

Derry City proved to be the beginning of a pattern in Ulster electoral contests. Orange Home Rule had proven to be short lived. Its swan song had been the Madden campaign of 1871. Henceforward even in Monaghan Orange support for national candidates would be virtually non-existent. The Tory press had feared the possibility of the adherence of the Orangemen to the new organisation. The Dublin Daily Express which had given the HGA a guarded welcome initially withdrew all support and commenced attacks upon it within three months. Even the Irish Times, whose owner Major Lawrence Knox was among the original constituents of the Association gave the movement, at best, a reluctant aid and defected in October, 1871 claiming that the HGA had been appropriated by persons who, for one reason or another, were unable to command public confidence.¹³ By the time of the Monaghan by-election Orange antipathy was becoming obvious. The Express claimed, "An Orange Federalist is a contradiction in terms. If repeal and separation from England is indeed desirable for Irish Protestants then their first step should be to dissolve the Orange Society."¹⁴ For the Tory press the choice which had faced the Monaghan Protestants, "was to declare themselves in favour of loyalty and order or of Ribbonism and sedition."¹⁵ This change in Orange attitude was

12 The significance of the Ballot Act is discussed below,

13 Thornley, Isaac Butt and Home Rule, p 125.

14 TCD, Larcom Papers, 1710/48, Daily Express, 12 July, 1871.

15 Ibid.

demonstrated at a meeting of the Duke of York LOL 1851 in Dublin, where in December, 1869 William Wolseley Madden had made his veiled reference to support for the Fenians to great applause.¹⁶ Now less than two years later the Worshipful Master, William Mearns termed Home Rule as Rome Rule and continued,

Some had had the audacity to allege that they were in favour of Home Rule. He wished to give that a flat contradiction (applause) there could be no doubt but so long as Cardinal Cullen and the Ultramontanes exercised the power they did in this land, Home Rule would be nothing more than a mockery, a delusion and a snare (hear) . . . if they accepted Home Rule they would violate their obligation - they would be doing all in their power to propagate the teachings of Rome (hear). 17

It had been in the southern provinces and in south Ulster that Orange antipathy towards England had been greatest and where the resultant move towards a more nationalistic stance had occurred. The debates on whether or not the Orange Institution should retain its clause regarding loyalty to England had been conducted by members from Dublin and south Ulster on the one hand and the pro-Union forces had been led by Orangemen from north-east Ulster, especially Belfast. It was thus the more significant when these anti-Unionists now reverted to their traditional stance. In Monaghan where this alienation had been greatest there were hopes that this nationalism might hold on, but at the November meeting of the County Grand Lodge it was resolved,

That though the Loyal Orangemen and Protestants of Ireland have been discouraged and discountenanced by the British Parliament and though having great reason to complain of certain Acts of Parliament (injurious to the cause of Protestantism) Yet feeling that the great majority of an Irish Parliament meeting in Dublin would be composed of men hostile to our Faith and enemies of Civil and Religious Liberty. In the opinion of this Grand Lodge any encouragement given by the Members of this Society to Home Rule as at present advocated is utterly inconsistent with the Spirit of Orangeism. 18

This was followed up at the Grand Lodge of Ireland in December when George Knight of Clones proposed a resolution which was almost identical in form to the Monaghan resolution.¹⁹

16 See above

17 TCD 1710/48, Daily Express, 22 September, 1871.

18 Monaghan County Minutes, 14 November, 1871, p 180.

19 Report of Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, 6-8 December, 1871.

Quite apart from the desertion of the Federalist cause by the Orangemen, the HGA had another problem to face and this was its poor organisation within the province. Even where there was on the ground support for the Home Rule idea, it was generally sporadic and independent of central control - disorganised. For example, as late as June 1873 the HGA wrote to a prominent Home Ruler in Bailieboro, county Cavan, requesting that the names of any secretaries of local branches which he might be aware of be sent to Dublin.²⁰ Similarly, in July a letter was sent to J G Biggar, President of the Belfast Home Rule Association with a similar request.²¹ Ulster was clearly an area where a very unsatisfactory situation existed with regard to the organisation of the movement. This was almost certainly due to the fact that there was less widespread support for the movement within the most northerly province. This point was well demonstrated when notice is taken of the printed report of the Home Rule Conference held in Dublin in November, 1873. It included a list of all those who attended the conference. Whereas it is obvious that not all Home Government delegates would have attended, it seems likely that because the proceedings were of crucial significance the Ulster Home Rulers would have been as likely to make the effort to be there as would those from the other provinces. There are difficulties with any listing such as this because it might not take into account Ulster men now living in the south, or alternatively, non-Ulster men then resident in the north. This number would, presumably, be small in any case, and should cancel out.²²

Of the 947 people who attended the conference only 38 (4%) gave Ulster addresses.²³ This indicates just how small the movement was in

20 PRONI 'Home Rule League Letterbook,' p 17, D 213.

21 Ibid, p 32.

22 There is really no way in which a definitive figure can be given as to those delegates who had Ulster connections. For example, Isaac Butt was an Ulsterman by 1871, and his son R B Butt has Ulster connections, through his father, but is hardly an Ulsterman.

23 These were: Belfast 14, Cavan 7, Derry 6, south Down 5, Donegal 3, Tyrone 2 and Monaghan 1.

Ulster. This is even more surprising in the Catholic areas of the province.²⁴ Also, the localised nature of Ulster support for Home Rule is significant; county Cavan enjoyed the largest representation and it was to be the first county to return Home Rulers to parliament. Further, Cavan was the one county in Ulster where the Home Rule movement would appear to have been entirely Roman Catholic. The small Protestant population took absolutely no part in the cause. Even in areas such as Newry where party spirit had always run high, a few Protestant nationalists could be found. Monaghan with but one citizen in attendance (Madden was not there) evinced, to some extent, a similar late development. But south Ulster was often an area where political nationalism was not active. It was an area where the Ribbon system had remained intact when it had been broken up elsewhere in the island. Indeed, Ireland's last important instance of Ribbon activity was the Brotherhood of St Patrick centred around Crossmaglen which was broken up at the end of the decade.²⁵ This tendency towards advanced nationalism whether it be Ribbonism or Fenianism generally meant that effective political organisation was a late arrival.

By the time of the Monaghan by-election Gladstone's government had been in power for almost three years. The Prime Minister had announced that his mission was to pacify Ireland, but he was also active in ameliorating the situation in the larger island. His first ministry has been referred to as the greatest of the Victorian reformist ministries and that it was during these years that, "the basis of the modern state was well and truly laid."²⁶ In Ireland this reformist nature of the Liberal government had been seen both in the Disestablishment of the Irish Church and also in the 1870 Irish Land Act. The terms of the former had been fairly generous to the Church of Ireland. However,

24 It is not always easy to distinguish between Catholics and Protestants but planter names and geographic location, can, as ever, give a reasonable basis upon which to base figures. These were 15 Protestants and 23 Catholics. Of the latter, 7 were from Cavan, 6 from Belfast, whereas 8 of the 16 Protestants were from that city. When it is remembered that Ulster had 897,230 Catholics to Connacht's 803,849, a total of 23 delegates was derisory.

25 The Brotherhood of St Patrick which became a significant political issue at the time along with the Maamtrasna incident has been left almost unstudied. It was utilised by Parnell in the House of Commons to attack the government.

26 David Thomson, England in the Nineteenth Century, (London, 1977), p 131

to appease Ireland's Catholics all Gladstone had to do was to effect the disestablishment. The terms around which this had been done were of little consequence to the broad mass of the Irish people, or for that matter, to their non-Protestant leaders. This allowed Gladstone to be as generous as possible to the Protestants so as to ensure that the pill proved to be not too bitter. The land question was a much more difficult one to find an answer to. The position of Ireland's tenant farmers had been a cause for dissatisfaction for some time, and it was by its very nature a problem which would have to be solved by different means. The agitation for the disendowment of the Irish Church had been directed towards the implementation of negative reform; that is, the removal of an injustice. With the land reform issue Gladstone had to formulate a new policy, one which would make a constructive move towards a more equitable method of land holding. Thus the reform of Irish land required specific alternative proposals.²⁷

The cry for the 'Three Fs' was a universal demand of both Protestant and Catholic. Thus, as we have already noticed, the land question was the one issue around which class politics could form. The sectarian dimension, much as the landlords would attempt to raise it, was not to the fore. John Blake Dillon²⁸ had informed a House of Commons committee in 1865 that a candidate for an Irish seat,

seldom . . . addresses his constituents, in any interest or belonging to any party, without stating his intention to advocate . . . a change in the law relating to landlord and tenant in some form or other . . . Some state it vaguely . . . others more distinctly.

29

Nor was the land question lightly utilised as a political issue by would-be politicians. To the Orange tenant farmers of Ulster, tenant right might mean the legalisation of the Ulster Custom, whereas in the south it might be taken by some as the first step in dispossessing the agents of an alien government. Nevertheless, the land question had been the paramount political issue since the removal of the established

27 The land issue and Gladstone's efforts to solve it have already been dealt with above,

28 John Blake Dillon, Had been elected to represent county Tipperary at the General Election of 1865. He sat for the seat until his death the following year.

29 E D Steele, Irish Land and British Politics, p 34.

church and its hated tithes. For Gladstone it had been the second step in his 'pacifying mission in Ireland.' But with all Irish measures Gladstone had to be very wary, not only because of the furore which might ensue in Ireland and the ability of the landed elite to mobilise support for its position with its English allies, but there was also the fear at Westminster that Irish legislation could cross the channel. It was partly this caution which brought Ireland to a position where the English government brought in a measure which it viewed as an equitable solution but which met with almost universal disappointment and disgust amongst Ireland's farming classes.

Having 'solved' both the land and the Church questions to his own satisfaction, Gladstone now turned his attention towards other problems which faced both Great Britain and Ireland. In 1872 the Secret Ballot Act was introduced and this has been seen as the key element in the subsequent victories for the Home Rule cause at the 1874 General Election. Parnell himself is supposed to have held this view³⁰ whereas A M Sullivan claimed that the measure dealt a death blow to electoral intimidation.³¹ However, the significance of the secret ballot has more recently been challenged.³² Certainly the result of the first Tipperary election indicates that open voting did not necessarily preclude electors from returning representatives of their choice.³³

By the time of the passage of the Ballot Act in July, 1872 the Home Rulers had won seven elections.³⁴ The party's six MPs plus Shaw, Callan, Browne, Maguire and McCarthy Downing were already working as a cohesive force within parliament; all pledged to Home Rule, denominational

³⁰ R Barry O'Brien, The Life of Charles Stewart Parnell, 1846-1891, (London, 1898), Vol I p 56.

³¹ A M Sullivan, New Ireland, p 363.

³² M Hurst, 'Ireland and the Secret Ballot,' in Historical Journal, Vol VIII, No 3, 1965, pp 326-352.

³³ See above,

³⁴ Hurst gives a number of eight. The difference is that he attributes the uncontested return of Browne to the Home Rule cause. In fact, Browne was definitely a Liberal at the time of his election and only espoused Home Rule principles once at Westminster. In addition, Nolan had been returned for Galway county although he was unseated upon petition for undue clerical influence.

education, land reform and amnesty for the Fenian prisoners. It was the last of these three demands which infuriated the Conservatives within the movement. The coupling of Home Rule with other issues was opposed to the view taken in Ireland by Butt when he urged all local HGA branches not to include other topics in their discussions so as not to cloud the central demand.³⁵ However, the reality of Irish politics was that to be returned for a Catholic constituency (and it was only such which returned Home Rulers even in the early period) a candidate had to advocate 'Catholic' issues especially denominational education which was the major aspiration of the hierarchy since the Church Act. Thus the attempts to attract Protestants by making Home Rule an issue which would have no unsavoury accompaniments was feasible only in principle. In practice, unless it was linked with traditional 'Catholic' demands it could never win at the ballot box.

The support for Fenian amnesty encapsulated the inherent impossibility of Orange Home Rule. For example, Madden's actions at the time of the Cabra meeting contrast sharply with those of Butt; the one chaired the meeting as President of the Amnesty Association whilst the other went to Dublin specifically to try and have it banned. And the role of the Fenians vis a vis the new meeting also worried Protestants. In some areas, especially at Westmeath and Kerry, the Fenians had gone beyond their promise of 'benevolent neutrality.' Lord Kenmare reported of the Kerry election,

Blennerhasset's agents openly confess that they rely on mob intimidation and that our voters will be afraid to come to the Poll. Their mobs are aggressively Fenian.

36

The movement had, by mid 1872, become almost exclusively green with the Catholic sentiment gradually acquiring dominance. There were still a few Protestant and Conservative Home Rulers but their number had diminished to such an extent that they were of little significance to the actual movement, and had no relevance to the Protestant community

³⁵ PRONI, D213, Home Rule League Letterbook, W J O'Neill Daunt to J Gleeson, Bristol, 19 June, 1873, "As an Association therefore you ought not to meddle with any other political business but Home Rule. If you do the result will probably be mischievous.

³⁶ M Hurst, Ireland and the Ballot Act, p 343.

as a whole. The diversity of opinion between Ireland's two communities which Butt had hoped to unite in the Home Government Association was seen at the time of the Secret Ballot where Catholics were almost universally in support of the measure, whereas Protestants often opposed it. Orangemen inevitably contended that a free vote would increase the power of the Catholics and thus subvert civil and religious liberty.³⁷

The Secret Ballot did not, however, free a downtrodden mass from the shackles of landlord oppression, and permit it for the first time to elect the men of its choice. The great defection of Catholics from the Liberals to the Home Rulers was well underway by the time of the measure, and the 1874 electoral victories would almost certainly have taken place in any case. Probably the only two constituencies where the measure had an immediate effect were in Ulster where it helped the Protestant tenant farmers of Tyrone and Antrim to almost elect tenant right candidates in opposition to orthodox Conservatives. The reason why the southern constituencies were impervious to the measure was that the overwhelming religious uniformity of the electorate ensured that the influence of the landlord could be negated by the power of the clergy. The clergy, for their part, had discovered at Longford that their wishes could also be ignored when the electorate were animated enough over an issue. The key was for the united efforts of the clergy and the local bishop, and this was not altogether certain during the 1870s and 1880s. If there was any sign of cleavage within clerical ranks then the influence of the priests might flounder.

The position within the Protestant constituencies was somewhat different. Naturally the role of the landlord was greater and that of the priest less. It was often more difficult for a Protestant tenant to go against the wishes of his landlord than for a Catholic. The ties between landlord and his Protestant tenantry were much greater due to the fact that they shared the same church and often the same lodgeroom. They were each susceptible to the same fears of Catholic superiority, and each looked backwards to the same historical foundation within Ireland. As the landlord might proudly remember that his ancestor had

³⁷ Johnston was almost alone in the Grand Orange Lodge in supporting the measure.

commanded a troop of men during the Williamite wars, the Protestant tenant, for his part, similarly harkened back to the days when his ancestors were members of the same army. It was thus more difficult for a Protestant to go against the desires of his landlord because of this emotive feeling of affinity which he felt (and which was often exploited) by the landlord. And even if he was inclined to vote contrary to his landlord's wishes he had to face the censure of religious peers. A Catholic who voted against the wishes of the landlord often voted in sympathy with his spiritual advisor. A Protestant who similarly votes against his landlord was generally supporting the same candidate as the Catholics in the constituency. He was thus open to the charge of voting against his 'national' interests; this was not the case with the Catholic who was invariably voting in favour of his national interests by disobeying the dictates of the landlord. It was significant that the incidents of voter independence in the Catholic constituencies were generally upon the national issue whilst Protestant independence was based upon a dissatisfaction with the position of the tenant farmers. For example, the Route Tenants Defence Association which had passed a resolution expressing its disappointment with the 1870 Land Act as early as 28 February, 1870³⁸ used all its power to ensure that a candidate would be selected by the Liberals who would represent the tenant farmers of county Antrim if elected. A number of meetings were held and these culminated in a vigorous campaign which resulted in Charles Wilson of Cheltenham, the tenant right and Liberal candidate, being narrowly defeated. At the 1869 by-election, Sir Shafto Adair had received less than half the votes received by the Conservative candidate.³⁹

At Tyrone J W Ellison Macartney who was a nominee of the county's 'Tenant righters' contested the seat against Captain the Honourable H W Lowry Corry. The county had had an MP from the Lowry Corry family since 1825. Macartney was an independent Conservative and an Orangeman but he was contesting the seat against an orthodox Conservative and he

38 S C McElroy, The Route Land Crusade, p 19.

39 1869	Capt H de G Seymour,	C	5588	1874	James Chainé	C	4356
	Sir R S Adair,	L	2294		Hon E O'Neill	C	4142
					Charles Wilson	L	4009

fought a campaign in which he was supported by both Protestant and Catholic tenant farmers. Once in parliament, Macartney subsequently joined the Conservatives just as another unorthodox Orange MP, William Johnston, had some years before. Nevertheless, in 1873 the Protestant tenant farmers of county Tyrone united with their Catholic neighbours to defeat the landed elite nominee for the first time in the county's history.⁴⁰

All that was now missing from the Home Rule equation was hierarchical support. With the movement gaining strength and as it gradually shed its Conservative elements this could not be long in coming. As the impetus for Home Rule increased the clergy were being pushed into a position where they would have to act quickly. If they remained aloof much longer they might find themselves in a position where they would have to follow their flocks with the resultant loss of face, and if they did not support the popular demand they could be placed in a position where they could be seen to be acting in an 'un-national' manner.

The hierarchy were not unsympathetic towards Gladstone. But they, too, were under pressure. The groundswell in favour of Home Rule was affecting them also. They had the same problem of how to react as did the Parish Priest, but this was further complicated by the difficulty of maintaining discipline especially amongst the more nationally minded curates. Not that there was unanimity amongst the Bishops. Cardinal Cullen was very much in favour of retaining close links with the Liberal government. After all, they had removed the established status of the Church of Ireland and had made an attempt to solve the land question. The Orangemen were very much opposed to the government and on the basis of 'my enemy's enemy is my friend' the Liberals could be supported. But the central reason why Cullen and many of the hierarchy were unhappy about the new movement was that they hoped that Gladstone would offer

40 The General Election of 1852 was the only one in which the county Tyrone had ever been contested by any but Conservatives. At that contest the result was:

Rt Hon Lord Claud Hamilton	C	3271
Rt Hon H T Lowry Corry	C	3221
Capt B H Higgins	L	982

Ireland an endowed Catholic University.⁴¹

In fact, the honeymoon period between the English government and the Catholic Church in Ireland was already coming to a close by the time of the University controversy. Cullen felt that Gladstone had not done enough for the Pope during his difficulties with the Italian republicans. He even blamed the English for the removal of a Royal Navy frigate from Civita Vecchia which he felt had been a key factor in the assault upon Rome.⁴² In Ireland the difficulties which the Pope had to face, united the bishops who had been differing openly over a number of issues. At the Vatican Council four of the Irish bishops, McHale, Moriarty, Furlong and Leahy had been opposed to the concept of infallibility, whereas at home, McHale had always proved a thorn in the side of Cullen with his nationalist proclivities. For Cullen, an ultramontane amongst ultramontanes, '... the Nationality of Ireland meant simply the Catholic Church,'⁴³ whereas McHale's attitude towards Ireland was much closer to that of the broad mass of the people and even the advanced nationalists.

The leaders of the HGA had been aware right from the start that they would have to attract as many of the clergy as possible if they were to oust the Liberals as the spokesmen for Catholic Ireland. To this end, W J O'Neill Daunt, one of the most respected Catholic Liberals in the island had been induced to become full-time secretary of the new movement in 1870 and he had even written to a number of bishops asking for their adherence but without result. During 1870-1873 the position had improved dramatically. For example, the listing of 359 supporters published by the HGA in August, 1870 included 21 Church of Ireland clergy but only 12 Catholic priests.⁴⁴ Daunt's view of the Protestants in the movement led him to conclude,

41 There was also a certain amount of sectarian antipathy behind the response of the hierarchy. Cullen's remarks to Donnelly and his replies underline the reticence of the hierarchy to support a Protestant inspired movement. See above,

42 E R Norman, The Catholic Church and Ireland in the Age of Rebellion, (Ithaca, 1965), p 415.

43 Cullen made this statement with regard to Judge Keogh, see Norman, Catholic Church and Ireland, p 426.

44 Thornley, Isaac Butt and Home Rule, p 109.

. . . the real danger to what is called 'Romish influence', was, not the fantastic bigotry of a few of our new patriots, but the apparent apathy of the hierarchy to national demand . . . it is curious that while the orange party oppose Home Rule as being identical with Rome Rule, the Protestant Home Rulers are accused by certain stupid Catholics as intending by their movement to upset Home rule. 45

The vagaries of Catholic support were well demonstrated by the first Tipperary by-election in November 1969 when Rossa beat Heron on a low poll; a result which was the result of divided loyalties within the clergy's ranks. On the other hand, the overwhelming defeat of Martin by Reginald Greville Nugent at Longford indicated the strength of united group voting when this was directed by the Priests. Martin's defeat at Longford in May 1870 was contrasted with the Meath result the following January when the clergy supported him. February 1872 had given the crowning examples of Catholic influence. In Kerry, Blennerhasset defeated J A Dease although the latter was endorsed by Bishop Moriarty. The key to the election was that the Bishop was unable to persuade his clergy to follow his lead (one of them even proposed Blennerhasset). In Galway the clergy endorsed Nolan and supported him to such an extent that he was unseated.

The evidence of the hierarchical factor gave a number of conclusions for Home Rulers. Firstly, if the Bishop and the clergy opposed a candidate it was most unlikely that he would be successful. Second, if the Bishop were to remain neutral, giving his clergy a free hand or proving to be unable to influence them, then a nationalist should win. Thirdly, it was most unlikely that Conservative Home Rulers would receive the endorsement of the local Bishop and clergy in a Catholic constituency and would be defeated. Thus it was essential that Catholics be put forward for Catholic constituencies, or at least radical Protestants. There was no place at the hustings for a King-Harman or a Madden in all but a few areas.⁴⁶ It there was a direct confrontation between a Catholic

45 NLI, Daunt's Journal, MS 3041, 27 March, 1871, pp 914-915.

46 King-Harman was elected unopposed for county Sligo in 1877 where he sat until the 1880 general election when he was displaced in a straight fight with Thomas Sexton and D M O'Connor, both Catholic Home Rulers. The only contest he ever won was as a Conservative for the Protestant constituency of Dublin county in 1883. He did not seek re-election in 1885.

Home Ruler and a Liberal Catholic then the support of the clergy would be the key factor. But as time went on and the support of the Catholic electors for Home Rule grew, then the possibilities of the Bishop being able to persuade the population not to vote for a Catholic Home Ruler decreased. It thus became a matter of urgency for both the Catholic hierarchy and the leaders of the movement for there to be an accommodation between them. As one Catholic editorial writer in Ulster put it,

By descent the priests come from the loins of the people. Humanly speaking their political aspirations must be for the elevation of their kith and kin, and for the whole Catholic people . . . There is, there can be, no conflict between the religious principle of an Irish priest, as such, and those of the laity . . . the trusted and tried leaders of the people in times of adversity when they had few other guides, their opinion, their sagacity, their advice even in political matters, are still needed to their flocks. It was not the HARMAN-KINGS or the professors of Trinity College who emancipated us, overthrew Protestant ascendancy or carried the Land Act.

47

What was needed now was a reason or motivation for Cullen and the rest of the Bishops to desert the Liberals in favour of the Home Rulers.

If there was one domestic issue upon which the Bishops were united it was the desire for a Catholic endowed University. This was something which Gladstone had promised and he had already kept two of his promises. Cullen, who quite rightly lived by the maxim what can I do for the best for Ireland's Catholics, was unwilling to alienate the Prime Minister before he had had an opportunity to grant a Catholic university. The initiative, then, rested with Gladstone, if he pleased Cullen with his university bill then the Liberal/Catholic alliance could continue in Ireland. If he did not, then the result for the Irish Liberals would be disastrous.

On 13 February, 1874 Gladstone addressed the House of Commons on his proposals for a Catholic university in Ireland. Gladstone and the Liberals in England realised that their support in Ireland was dependent upon a successful completion of the Catholic university question. As John Morley wrote subsequently, when the Cabinet undertook discussion on the measure in November 1872 it realised that it was among the front

rank of unsettled questions.⁴⁸ Throughout November the Cabinet discussed the proposals. Finally Gladstone and his associates came up with a scheme. The basic principle was that the University of Dublin was to be separated from Trinity College, and was to become a National University. To it would be affiliated the Queen's Colleges in Cork and Belfast, Magee College in Derry, Trinity College and the new Catholic College in Dublin.⁴⁹

Although Cardinal Manning wrote to Cardinal Cullen immediately urging him to support the measure,⁵⁰ Cullen opposed it from the start. The measure would, of course, be opposed by the Tories within parliament. In addition, a wing of the Liberal party was also against the proposals. The key was to be held by the Catholic Liberals from Ireland in association with the handful of Home Rulers. Any hope that they would support the measure was dashed, when on 9 March, Cullen issued a Pastoral which entirely condemned the measure.⁵¹ When a vote was taken in the early hours of the morning of 12 March, the government was found to be in a minority of three votes.

The Liberal government decided that it would be best if it delivered its resignation, but it declined to endorse a dissolution of parliament. And it came as no surprise when Disraeli refused to become Prime Minister on those terms. The Liberal government was able to totter on until February 1874, but it was clear that much of the momentum had gone out of the Gladstone administration which had started as the great reforming government. And whereas Gladstone did deliver the goods on the church and land issues, he had failed on the education issue, and a two-leaved shamrock elicited little support in Ireland.

The defeat of Gladstone's university measure broke up the Irish/Liberal alliance. This meant not only that the government in Westminster was in a less secure position, but also that in Ireland the Liberals' position was drastically weakened. This was a great benefit to the Home Government Association which was vying with the Liberals for the same

48 Norman, Catholic Church and Ireland in the Age of Rebellion, p 444.

49 Ibid, p 449.

50 John Morley, The Life of William Ewart Gladstone, (London, 1903), Vol II p 444.

51 Norman, Catholic Church and Ireland in the Age of Rebellion, pp 452-3.

power base. Catholic Ireland was the key to the majority of the island's seats. And it was clear that the time was now right for the Home Government Association to move forward in the three southern provinces.

In the period from Blennerhassett's victory at Kerry in February 1872 until the general election of 1874, there was little significant electoral activity. There were a further nine by-elections. Four of these, all fought during 1874, were uncontested; Liberals retaining Roscommon and Waterford county, Conservatives holding on to Lisburn and Armagh county. Of the other five contests, William Redmond was returned virtually unopposed for Wexford borough,⁵² whilst in Mallow a Catholic Liberal, William Felix Munster defeated J G MacCarthy, the Home Ruler. This was principally the result of Home Rule divisions.⁵³ In any case, the size of the Mallow electorate (only 169 voted) greatly diminished the significance of this result.

The remaining three contested elections were of greater importance. In the City of Derry the appointment of Richard Dowse to the position of baron of the Exchequer in Ireland necessitated his resignation. Dowse had defeated Lord Claud Hamilton in 1868, and upon his appointment as Attorney General he had had to resign his seat and recontest it, once again beating off the Conservative challenge. Now that he had to retire the Liberals picked another Catholic, Christopher Palles, the Irish Attorney General, and thus Dowse's legal successor. The Conservatives nominated C E Lewis, an English Presbyterian. Lewis could not get the support of the local Conservatives who preferred a local man, Alderman Bartholomew McCorkell.⁵⁴

It was decided by the Home Government Association that the seat

52 The seat had been held by a Liberal, R J Devereux. When he resigned, two members of the Redmond family addressed the county with one of them, Walter, retiring. W A Redmond recorded a 321:51 victory.

53 The local IRB thought MacCarthy had informed on Rossa. This is most unlikely but it led Butt to rescind HGA endorsement. See, Thornley, Isaac Butt and Home Rule, pp 132-133.

54 On Liberal politics in Ulster during this period, see, Thomas McKnight, Ulster As It Is, (London, 1896), Ch XIV.

should be contested. Joseph Biggar,⁵⁵ the President of the Belfast Home Rule Association was early in the field. He had the support of the local Home Rulers. Biggar had the support of Bishop Dorrian of Belfast, as well as the advanced nationalists. It is possible that Biggar merely wished to split the Catholic vote and thus embarrass the government by aiding the return of a Conservative. However, a week before the election the local bishop and the Catholic clergy came out in favour of Palles, the only Catholic in the contest.⁵⁶ With such a force arrayed against him, Biggar was defeated. And although such a result could only be expected, the size of the Home Rule defeat proved a great embarrassment. The result was:-⁵⁷

C E Lewis	C	696
Rt Hon Christopher Palles	L	522
J G Biggar	HR	89
Bartholomew McCorkell	C	2

The key factor in the ignominious failure of the Home Rule campaign in Ireland was the endorsement of the Liberal candidate by the local bishop. The power of the clergy was even more pronounced by the fact that this was the first election in Ireland to be fought under the secret ballot. The result indicated that the chances of success during this period of the evolution of the Home Rule movement rested upon, to a large extent, the support of the Catholic electors. And this support, in turn, was extremely uncertain if the endorsement or neutrality of the clergy was not secured.

A few days after the Londonderry result the voters of Cork City went to the polls. Cork had been a Home Rule seat since the adherence of John Francis Maguire to the HGA after his re-election in 1868. Initially, a Catholic Liberal, J C Mathew, a nephew of the temperance

⁵⁵ Joseph Gillis Biggar, 1828-1890. A pork manufacturer from Belfast, educated at Belfast Royal Academy. A Presbyterian nationalist, he converted in 1877. Biggar was on the Supreme Council of IRB. After his defeat in Derry he successfully contested Cavan in 1874. He held one of the Cavan seats until his death. He was one of the formulators of the parliamentary policy of 'obstruction.'

⁵⁶ Thornley, Butt and Home Rule, p 134.

⁵⁷ Listing from Walker, Parliamentary Election Results in Ireland, p 296.

crusader, came forward. In addition, the mayor of the city, John Daly, a moderate Home Ruler also stated that he would stand. Joseph Ronayne, a veteran nationalist who was not a member of the HGA also stated that he would address the constituency. After considerable bitterness, Daly withdrew, as did Mathew. This left Ronayne facing a Conservative, James E Pim. Faced with such a choice, the Liberals and the moderate Home Rulers supported Ronayne and he was returned with a safe majority.

The final contested by-election prior to the general election was in county Tyrone. This time an independent, J W Ellison Macartney came forward against the Conservative, Captain Hon Henry William Lowry Corry. Macartney was a 'Liberal-leaning' Orangeman and there is some evidence of Catholic support for his campaign. However, he was defeated narrowly, and had to await the imminent dissolution of parliament.

The question of Protestant involvement within the Home Government Association has already been discussed.⁵⁸ As the movement progressed electorally, and evolved both philosophically and administratively, it shed much of its Protestant veneer. The days of Orange Home Rule were gone. As far as the Orange Institution was concerned, Home Rule was already dismissed as Rome Rule. And this step, the inexorable sectarianisation of the movement was established by the time of the general election. It had proven essential to kill off the old organisation because of its Protestant and Conservative origins.⁵⁹ The successor, the Home Rule League, could appeal to Catholics, accept widespread membership through the Associate membership, and come to a working agreement with the Catholic hierarchy. The Liberal party had failed to deliver on the education question, and it was in nobody's interest to have that party remain the spokesman for Catholic Ireland. Thus the new organisation had to be both Catholic and national, with an organisation which was both far-reaching and populist. To this end, a conference to consider the future of the movement was held on 18, 19 and 20 November, 1873, and the call was endorsed by a number of Catholic prelates.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ See above,

⁵⁹ This question is dealt with in D Thornley, 'Irish Conservatives and Home Rule,' in Irish Historical Studies, Vol II (1958-1959), pp 200-222.

⁶⁰ Dr O'Hea of Ross, Dr MacHale of Tuam, Dr Keane of Cloyne signed the requisition for the conference, whilst Dr Donnelly of Clogher, Dr Dorrian of Down and Connor and Dr Duggan of Clonfert wrote in favour of the movement but declining to be publicly linked with it. See Thornley, Butt and Home Rule, pp 159-160.

Apart from broadening the scope of the Home Rule movement within the country, the conference also called for the return of as many Home Rulers as possible at the next election. However, a resolution which would have bound those MPs to act as a body on all issues was defeated, primarily at the behest of the members of parliament who attended the conference. Nevertheless, the party was henceforward placed on a much more popular base. As one scholar has noted,

. . . it was more important for a nationalist agitation to have the encouragement of the Catholic masses than the allegiance of the Protestant gentry.

61

It was with a new Home Rule movement that Ireland approached the 1874 general election. On 24 January Gladstone announced that he would resign as Prime Minister and appeal to the country. Immediately the various candidates for the major parties prepared themselves for what has been considered the most significant election in nineteenth century Ireland. The general election would see a massive shift in the parliamentary representation of the island, as Home Rule displaced Liberalism in the Catholic constituencies of the island. In Ulster the Tories would hold on to their traditional seats, but not without cost.

The year 1874 opened with a slight increase in sectarian tension. The previous year there had been an attack by a Catholic crowd upon Protestant Sunday School children from Stewartstown in county Tyrone. In return the local Orangemen arrived with guns to protect the excursionists home. Although a collision did not take place on the return journey, there were a number of party cases which resulted from the friction. Throughout January and February 1874 these cases came to court, and they helped to maintain the sectarian awareness of the peoples of south Ulster.

Another feature of the Ulster scene at the beginning of the year was the great Land Conference held in Belfast on 20 and 21 January. Gladstone's Land Act of 1870 had met with almost universal disappointment. For example, the Route Defence Association immediately passed resolutions attacking the measure as inadequate.⁶² The basic principles which the act attempted to legally recognise were that improvements upon

61 McCaffrey, 'Irish Federalism in the 1870s,' p 16.

62 S C McElroy, The Route Land Crusade, (Coleraine, nd), p 19.

holdings were the property of the tenants and they could not be taxed upon them, anyone wrongfully evicted could sue the landlord, and the Ulster Custom, accepted as common usage, was to have legal recognition.⁶³

Gladstone may have felt that this was a generous settlement of the land question in Ireland. Certainly, the acceptance of the principle that the tenant who improved his holding should not be penalised was a major step. Nevertheless, it did not go far enough. For example, there was no justification for permitting a practice in one part of the island and prohibiting it in another. Nor was there any proposal to pass the title of the land on to the tenant. The Bright Clauses went some way to solving this problem, but their effect would clearly be hampered by 'office rules' and other impediments which the landlord could still enforce.

The Land Conference was mostly an Ulster affair, although there were delegates from Munster and Dublin, and there were resolutions passed which requested justice for all of Ireland. Among those present were Rev Johnston, the Moderator of the General Assembly, Rev J B Armour, William Johnston MP, Phil Callan MP, J G Biggar, A J Kettle, later a leader of the Land League and Mr James Byrne JP, Chairman of the Mallow Farmers' Club.⁶⁴ The ability of the land question to unite farmers both north and south of the Boyne indicated that it was a measure which none of the major political parties in Ireland could afford to ignore.

The reorientation of the Home Rule movement, the importance of the disaffection of the tenant farmers, the advent of the secret ballot and the break of the Liberal/Catholic hierarchy alliance jointly set the scene for a memorable general election in Ireland. An editorial in the Catholic journal Ulster Examiner and Northern Star, suggested that many seats could be won from the Tories in Ulster:

⁶³ There are a number of discussions of the 1870 Land Act. See, for example, N D Palmer, The Irish Land League Crisis, (New Haven, 1940), Ch III; E D Steele, Irish Land and British Politics: Tenant Right and Nationality, 1865-1870, (Cambridge, 1974); C F Kolbert and T O'Brien, Land Reform in Ireland: A Legal History of the Irish Land Problem and its Settlement, (Cambridge, 1975); B L Solow, The Land Question and the Irish Economy, 1870-1903, (Cambridge, Mass, 1971). For a contemporary's criticism see, S C McElroy, The Route Land Crusade, pp 19-27.

⁶⁴ McElroy, Route and Land Crusade, p 25.

We do not say that pronounced Home Rulers may be returned for all Northern constituencies, but in some, at least, avowed friends to the great national cause may readily enough obtain seats, and in others Liberal Tenant Righters can easily be returned over the nominees of Tory ascendancy. Tyrone will probably send forward such a representative. Monaghan will declare emphatically for Home Rule. Donegal should also be found in the same category. Down and Armagh must wrest from the landocracy the power to injure and jeopardise the rights of the tenant-farmers, and Cavan we earnestly trust will be found on the popular side. Ulster must redeem herself from the trammels that have long bound her limbs, and show to the world that in the race of progress, enlightenment, and advancement, she is able and willing to take rank with the foremost. 65

Perhaps as an indication of this optimism, only 19 of Ireland's 103 seats in 1874 were uncontested. At the 1868 election 67 of 105 seats fell into this category. Looking at Ulster we find that in 1868, 21 seats were not contested, whilst six years later, only Lisburn and Downpatrick were left uncontested. And for the first time the Home Rulers would be fighting as a political party and not as a collection of individuals with local support and Dublin endorsement. The League issued an address from its headquarters to the effect that it was essential to return as many Home Rulers as possible and not to split the vote in the constituencies.⁶⁶

On 26 January the Ulster Examiner reported that John MacMahon would contest county Monaghan.⁶⁷ However, the Northern Standard did not agree. Its edition of 31 January carried the addresses of the two sitting members, Shirley and Leslie, and of the Home Rule candidate, John Madden. Furthermore, its editorial on the subject of the election made no mention of the Liberal party nominee.⁶⁸ Elsewhere in south Ulster the Liberals were active. In Enniskillen Jeremiah Jordan, a local Protestant Home Ruler stood as a Liberal supporter of tenant right, denomination education and a measure of self government for Ireland. He was supported in the

65 Ulster Examiner and Northern Star, 26 January, 1874, p 2.

66 Freeman's Journal, 26 January, 1874, p 2.

67 Ulster Examiner, 26 January, 1874, p 3.

68 Northern Standard, 31 January, 1874, p 2.

contest by the Catholics and Home Rulers of the town.⁶⁹ In county Tyrone J W E Macartney was the nominee of the tenant farmers. Macartney was a difficult candidate to define. He is generally considered to have been a Conservative from the start. However, in 1873 he had contested the seat in opposition to the official Conservative nominee, and in this he was in a similar position to that of Johnston in Belfast in 1868 and Dalway in Carrickfergus. Indeed Macartney may have been even more open to radical ideas than has hitherto been recognised. For example, during his first campaign a leading member of the Home Government Association and at that time the travelling secretary, Hugh Heinrich wrote to Butt that he had been in communication with Macartney and that he had given a pledge,

. . . to vote for the introduction of Home Rule or any other Irish measure for discussion in the English parliament. More I do not think he would promise - nor under the circumstances do I think we could have expected more.

70

Macartney is always classified as a Conservative, and perhaps that is the nearest label that would approximate to his ideology. However, as with Dalway, and the young Johnston before he was bought off with the Commissionership of Fisheries, Macartney was of a much different stamp to that of Charles Powell Leslie, Rt Hon Lowry Corry or others of the Tory landowning classes. It was of little surprise, therefore, when the Tenant Right supporters, the Home Rulers and the local Catholics all made common cause with Macartney. He was generally referred to in the press as the Liberal candidate.

As with Tyrone, vigorous contests were expected in all the seats of south Ulster. In Enniskillen Jeremiah Jordan, a future Nationalist MP for West Clare and South Fermanagh, came forward on Liberal and Tenant Right principles against Col Hon W S Knox, the local landowner. Similarly, in Dungannon Thomas A Dickson, future Liberal MP for the St Stephen's Green Division of Dublin, was supported by all anti-Conservative elements. The Examiner summed up the position of the Catholic Home Rulers when it noted,

69 See Ulster Examiner, January/February, 1874.

70 NLI, Butt Papers, MS8695(12), Heinrich to Butt, March, 1873.

The great question for Ireland is Home Rule, the great question for the Ulster counties is tenant right . . . We ask the Catholics of Ulster to commit not rashly to any party. They must hold themselves in readiness to strike when called upon, yet we cannot advise them to attempt more than be reasonably achieved.

71

Over in Donegal the Liberals were hoping to wrest the representation of the county away from the Conservatives. This would be a monumental task as Tory hegemony in the county had only been challenged twice since 1832, and each time the attempts had met with failure. This time the veteran Tenant Right brothers, Tristram and Dr Evory Kennedy contested the seats. Tristram had sat as a Liberal for the county of Louth from 1865 until 1868, and he was always active in Liberal and Tenant Right politics in the province. And although neither he nor his brother were able to break the Conservative hold on the constituency, they came very close, and the 1874 election was the last electoral victory the Conservatives ever enjoyed in that county.

The other seat in south Ulster which was also subjected to a Liberal challenge was county Fermanagh. This was the first time since 1830 that the electoral power of the local Tory landowners had been challenged. The Tory candidates were Hon H A Cole and W H Archdale. Members of these two families had represented the county for most of the previous 40 years. Cole had represented the county since 1854. Against these two came the eccentric Liberal landlord of Belleisle, Lisnaskea, J G V Porter. He was supported by Captain C R Barton. As with Donegal the Fermanagh campaign would be unsuccessful.

In many ways the contests in Monaghan and Cavan were viewed with greater anticipation. Notwithstanding the report that John MacMahon was to contest the seat, John Madden was the first non-Conservative to address the county. Madden, in fact, issued two addresses. As with the 1871 contest he had a copy of a Monaghan Grand Jury resolution published. At the previous election he had published the resolution against the Act of Union of the Grand Jury. This time he chose to publish the resolution of the same body, once again with his grandfather in the position of foreman, in favour of legislative independence in 1782. This resolution had declared that they would,

assert and maintain the Constitutional rights of this Kingdom, to be governed by such Laws ONLY, as are enacted by the King, Lords and Commons of Ireland; and that we will in EVERY instance, uniformly and strenuously OPPOSE the execution of any Statutes, except such as derive authority from said Parliament . . . 72

Madden in his accompanying piece pointed out that the Sheriff of Monaghan at that time was Thomas Corry of Rockcorry, and that he and Samuel Madden had signed the address. Madden continued that the Monaghan MP, Charles Powell Leslie, the grandfather of John Leslie MP, had voted against the Act of Union, as did the Archdale, the Coles and the Hamiltons. In 1800, he contended that the Irish nation had been sold out by 'Whigs and Whiggery, the so called Liberals.' And finally he argued,

The Conservatives or Tories, on the contrary opposed the Union as long as they were able, but when the Irish Parliament passed the Act of Union, they thought themselves bound by the decision of the Country, and as long as the Union REMAINED INVIOLETE, in my opinion they did nothing but their duty. How loyally they have done it, I need not say. But now that the English Parliament has Repealed a portion of the Act of Union, I for one, solemnly repudiate the shreds that have been left behind! 73

This nationalist tenet was backed up by another item, that of the Madden Address. Its principles were those of the old Home Government Association. That is, Madden stated in the opening paragraph that he came forward as a supporter of Home Rule, and that if he was elected he would 'know no other party BUT IRELAND,' adding that although Irishmen may disagree upon every other issue they should unite on this the most important of all. Having put forward this Home Rule ideology, Madden then turned his attention to specific grievances which required reform. He stated that he would like to see a reform of the Poor Law system and also of the Grand Jury System. Madden also stated that whilst he was against undue interference with the rights of property,

. . . I shall especially advocate reforms in the laws relating to the settlement of real estate, simplifying the present cumbrous and expensive system in the sale and transfer of land. I shall, at the same time, do my best to promote an extension of the

72 Northern Standard, 31 January, 1874, p 2.

73 Ibid.

facilities to tenants desirous of purchasing their farms under what are known as 'The Bright Clauses' in the Land Act.

74

Madden's address was not dissimilar to other Home Rule manifestoes put forward by Home Rule candidates. It has been estimated⁷⁵ that of the non-Conservative candidates' addresses, 60% gave Home Rule pride of place. In addition, denominational education was the second most prominent issue, remaining unchanged since 1868. Shortly behind this issue came amnesty and land reform, with Grand Jury reform and defence of the Pope the peripheral issues. It was not surprising that in a constituency like Monaghan, with the Home Rule candidate hoping to receive a considerable number of votes from the Protestant electors that defence of the Pope should not feature among the principles of the candidate. Similarly, the cause of denominational education was not one which would curry favour with the Protestant electors. The final omission was that of Amnesty for the Fenians, and with Madden's past record on the amnesty meeting at Cabra it was hardly surprising that he should not advocate the issue which had been the guiding force in the meeting which he had hoped to have banned.

It would hardly be unfair to describe Madden's address as a 'Protestant' Home Rule address. That is, the omission of issues which would normally be present came from the religious orientation of the campaign. If Madden was addressing a purely Catholic electorate then he could have included these most Catholic of measures. However, Monaghan was a constituency which was evenly split between Protestants and Catholics. For success Madden had to appeal to both communities, and whilst recognising that he would receive the very vast majority of his support from the Catholics of the county, he had to also attract enough Protestant votes to capture the second seat. This would not be possible if he was to issue a purely 'Catholic' address. Thus Madden's position was defined not so much by his own personal predilections, but rather by the need to attract some Protestant votes. The exception to this may have been amnesty for the prisoners, but even this was a quasi-Catholic issue in the minds of the Protestants of Ulster. So even without

74 Ibid.

75 Thornley, Isaac Butt and Home Rule, p 176. See also, L McCaffrey, 'Home Rule and the General Election of 1874 in Ireland,' in Irish Historical Studies, Vol VIII, No 33 (March, 1954), pp 196-201.

Madden's stance in 1869 he would have found it difficult to attract the Protestant voters with it. After all, it was only necessary for him to receive the support of the Catholics and those of his tenants who were Protestants to see himself securely returned to Westminster.

The appeals of the two Conservative candidates were fairly standard. S E Shirley reported in his address that he entertained the same Conservative and Constitutional views now as he had in 1868. In addition, he promised to oppose 'what may be termed sensational legislation.'⁷⁶ With regard to Home Rule, Shirley stated that whilst he was opposed to any separation of Ireland from Great Britain,

. . . yet, I think that any practical suggestions which would in any way lessen the expense and give greater facilities for the dispatch of Irish local business should be favourably entertained.

John Leslie, in his appeal for support, stated that there were two great questions before the country at present. The first was that of Home Rule. Leslie claimed that since the electors had already given their opinion of Home Rule in 1871 (the defeat of Butt) he had attempted to find out what the issue was. The proper place for the discussion of such an issue was in the House of Parliament. This had never taken place, and Leslie claimed that perhaps Home Rule, therefore, must be defined as separation of Ireland from England. If it was not, then it would be discussed in parliament.

The other great question Leslie claimed was that of education. Leslie was of the opinion that religion should be the foundation of all education. To this end he believed that the existing system of education was the most efficacious method of assuring the religious content in the education of the country. This would not find favour with the Catholics who wished for full denominational schools. It also set him against the compromise proposal that there should be no religious instruction in the schools.

The first week of the campaign saw Madden the most active of the candidates. The Conservative candidates were not in evidence in the constituency as yet. However, John Madden was immediately out addressing meetings in the county. During this first week up to Saturday, 31 January, he spoke to gatherings of electors at Carrickmacross,

⁷⁶ Northern Standard, 31 January, 1874, p 2.

Castleblayney, Ballybay and Monaghan. His concentration on the south and west of the constituency indicates his realisation that it would be his ability to persuade wholehearted support for his campaign amongst the Catholics of the county which would hold the key. His managing to get limited support from the Protestant community of the central and western part of the county would be of no benefit unless the Catholics of the constituency backed him.

This realisation was not only in John Madden's mind. Bishop Donnelly of Clogher, reported to be one of the more nationally orientated of the hierarchy, held the key to the vote in the Catholic areas. On Monday, 26 January Donnelly sent a circular to all the Parish Priests in the county calling them to a meeting in his palace on the following Thursday.⁷⁷ This gathering would decide the fate of Madden's campaign. His address was the first published, although posters were placed throughout the county to the effect that Leslie and Shirley would again be coming forward.⁷⁸ In any case, the Ulster Examiner was in no doubt as to the probable outcome in Monaghan. A letter to that journal signed 'A Truagh Home Ruler' claimed that 60% of the electors of Monaghan was Catholic. And it continued,

There are also among the Protestant electors a large number favourable to Home Rule; for it is well known that at the last election, when Isaac Butt contested the county against Leslie, he received from them a good deal of support.

Now, this being the case, it is quite plain that if two Home Rule candidates offer themselves for Monaghan they will be triumphantly returned . . . choose two candidates who can be trusted, and there is no fear but the men of Monaghan will do their duty by placing them at the head of the poll.

79

The key phrase in the foregoing was whether or not the candidate could be trusted. This had been Madden's great difficulty in 1871. Once again, he had to persuade the Catholics of Monaghan, and especially Bishop Donnelly, that he could be trusted. Donnelly had already experienced the ire of both the Cardinal and the Lord Chancellor at his

77 Donnelly's Diary, 26 January, 1874.

78 Freeman's Journal, 30 January, 1874, p 1; also, Ulster Examiner, 2 February, 1874, p 4.

79 Ulster Examiner, 29 January, 1874, p 3.

supposed endorsement of Madden at the last election in Monaghan. It was unlikely that he would risk a similar reception this time unless he was sure that Madden was a true member of the Home Rule League, and more especially, willing to advocate the measures which the bishop would expect from 'his' nominee.

On Tuesday, 27 January, two days before the full meeting of all the priests of the county, there was no other meeting at Donnelly's residence. The bishop refers to it in his diary simply as 'PPs met and discussed election matters,'⁸⁰ which might indicate that Donnelly was in the habit of having a small caucus meeting of the most senior and more political of the diocesan clergy in an attempt to decide upon the recommendations to be placed before the full meeting of the Clogher clergy. Donnelly mentions two of the priests by name, Owens and Maglone, and these were two of the priests assigned to the parish of Monaghan town.⁸¹ This might suggest that the rest of the county took its lead from the Catholics of the county town.

One important task undertaken by Donnelly, Owens and Maglone was to tally up the county election lists. When this task was completed they discovered that the Catholics had a majority of 134 upon the electoral register.⁸² This fact, coupled with the advent of the secret ballot should have resulted in the return of a nominee of the local bishop. Certainly the Freeman's Journal was of the opinion that the secret ballot had finally emancipated the Catholic masses 'from landlord terrorism.'⁸³

On the same day as Maglone and Owens were present at the bishop's palace, a deputation arrived from John Madden. It consisted of George Knight, the prominent Orangeman and solicitor from Clones who was acting as Madden's agent, and two Catholics called McDermott and Edward Donnelly.⁸⁴ McDermott was one of two men who had called upon the bishop in 1871 to ask him to support Madden at that time.⁸⁵ He must have informed the

⁸⁰ Donnelly's Diary, 27 January, 1874.

⁸¹ Catholic Directory, 1874

⁸² Donnelly's Diary, 27 January, 1874.

⁸³ Freeman's Journal, 26 January, 1874, p 2.

⁸⁴ Donnelly's Diary, 27 January, 1874.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 8 July, 1871.

men that he would be unable to commit himself until after the meeting on Friday, because on the Thursday Madden himself called with the bishop to solicit his support. However, Donnelly was not at home.⁸⁶

The local press reported that Madden had had a meeting with the local Home Government Association in Monaghan to request their official endorsement for his candidacy but that he had been unsuccessful.⁸⁷ The reason for Madden's difficulties was that his attitude towards tenant right did not meet with the approval of the Monaghan Home Rulers. A fact which indicates how far the Home Rule League had moved from the old days of its inception when it was a major tenet of the association that no other issue be allowed to interfere with the basic demand - that of Home Rule for Ireland.

It is unclear what the priests decided at their meeting. Donnelly only records that they decided upon a course of action. However, subsequent events indicate that they decided not to openly support Madden. Nevertheless, he continued upon his canvass of the constituency. On Thursday, 28 January, Madden held an election meeting in the ballroom of Thompson's Hotel in Clones. The meeting was well attended and Madden gave an impassioned speech. The nationalist papers carried reports of the great support which Madden was receiving. During the meeting Madden condemned the Poor Law system. He stated that three of the four poor houses in Monaghan should be amalgamated. This would mean that one staff would be required instead of three, and this would necessarily lead to a smaller wages bill and a reduction in the rates. Madden also stated that he was in favour of an improvement of the Land Act,

. . . and as a peasant proprietor he would advocate a reform in the Grand Jury System, and a government loan for the drainage of Lough Erne. Mr Madden was enthusiastically applauded throughout.⁸⁸

The proposal to drain Lough Erne was one which had been advocated for some time. The Madden estates being in the Erne basin were affected

⁸⁶ Ibid, 28 January, 1874. Madden was in Castleblayney that day and must have called on his way home; see Madden's Diary, 28 January, 1874.

⁸⁷ Northern Standard, 31 January, 1874, p 2.

⁸⁸ Ulster Examiner, 2 February, 1874, p 4. See also Freeman's Journal, 30 January, 1874, p 3.

by the frequent flooding which occurred in the area.⁸⁹ One of the major advocates of the drainage of the Erne basin was the Liberal candidate for Fermanagh, J G V Porter.

The conservative Northern Standard had a slightly different report of the meeting. It stated,

Mr Madden had a very uproarious meeting in Mrs Thompson's Hotel, Clones, on Thursday last. There was a great deal of fun and mischief going on, but very little serious work done, if we except the breaking of most of the furniture in the room. 90

This would suggest that the meeting in Clones was not as pro-Madden as the nationalist press would make out. The town of Clones should have been a major centre of Madden support. Not only were the Catholics of the area as strongly nationalist as those of any other part of the county, but the Madden estates being located in that area, it could be expected that his tenants would vote for him. In addition, the Orange vote in the Clones area should have been available to him. During the first week of the campaign Madden had concentrated on the Clones area. He had begun election work on 26 January, and started to canvass in Ballybay on that day.⁹¹ Perhaps he chose that town to commence his canvass because it was there that he feared opposition most. At the nomination in 1871 John MacMahon of Ballybay had announced his retirement with the promise that he would poll the electors to the last man at the next election.⁹² Perhaps remembering this Madden decided that it would be profitable to get endorsements from the Liberals and Catholics there before MacMahon could announce his candidature; support for Madden might dissuade MacMahon from coming forward.

The following day Madden had spent in Clones canvassing, and it was from here that he issued his election address. In addition, the fact that his election agent was a solicitor in Clones and that he lived near the town made that place the obvious centre for his campaign machine. On Wednesday 28 January Madden addressed the electors of Castleblayney

89 There is a considerable archive of material relating to the various schemes to drain the Erne basin in the Madden documents at Hilton Park.

90 Northern Standard, 31 January, 1874, p 3.

91 Madden's Diary, 26 January, 1874.

92 See above, Ch 4.

where he reported he was very well received.⁹³ From thence it was back to Clones where he spent all day Thursday, it being a fair day. At the beginning of the campaign when Madden required to be near his election headquarters it was only to be expected that he should concentrate on the Clones area.

At the end of the first week of the campaign Madden had managed to cover most of the county, concentrating on Clones, Castleblayney and Ballybay. He had issued his address and posted bills throughout the county. The Conservatives, for their part, had issued their addresses on 30 January but had been unable to visit the constituency. However, because they had managed to get their addresses into the Northern Standard which was published each Saturday, they were able to give the Conservative supporters in the county an indication of their intention to contest the seat. Madden also had his address in the Standard but in addition he had canvassed very hard all week. On Friday, 30 January he was in Monaghan town,⁹⁴ and the following day he addressed a large meeting in Ballybay where he received an enthusiastic reception.⁹⁵ As each of the candidates was a Protestant, they addressed no election meetings held on the Sunday.⁹⁶ The following week would see an increase in the electoral activity in the constituency with the arrival of the Conservative candidates.

On Friday, Donnelly had a large number of curates to dinner to discuss the election. Presumably after the meeting of the priests the previous day when a decision had been taken, the bishop then met the curates with the purpose of organising the implementation of the decisions taken by their superiors.⁹⁷ On the Saturday, Donnelly had an even more interesting meeting. The new High Sheriff appointed for the county in January, 1874, had been Sir William Tyrone Power of Annamakerrig House, Newbliss. He was a model landlord and a supporter

93 Madden's Diary, 28 January, 1874.

94 Freeman's Journal, 31 January, 1874, p 3.

95 Madden's Diary, 31 January, 1874.

96 There was a gathering of 10,000 supporters of Madden at Ballytrain on the Sunday, but he was not present. See Ibid, 1 February, 1874.

97 Donnelly's Diary, 30 January, 1874.

of the Liberal party. The lack of a Liberal candidate in Monaghan was recognised during the first week of the campaign, and Power decided to come forward. Perhaps this had been as a result of the information that Madden had run into difficulties with the Home Rule Association over his definition of tenant right. If Madden could not persuade the Catholics to support his Home Rule campaign, then there was a chance that they would back a Gladstonian who took a more radical view of the settlement of the land question.

Donnelly appears to have been very impressed with Power as he described him as, "a very nice man & most liberal & just in his views."⁹⁸ Nevertheless, Donnelly attempted to dissuade him from standing. As Madden was determined to stand and would thus receive a large number of Catholic votes, there would be no point in Power coming forward. However, Power was determined to address the constituency. He informed the bishop to this effect on Sunday.⁹⁹ Word of his candidacy reached Monaghan's electors on Monday, 1 February. It evoked a mixed response. The Ulster Examiner, for example, noted that,

Everyone thinks it is a trick of the government, and as far as I can learn the new candidature is a failure; his very name is being hooted. Mr Madden's return is a certainty. Farney is pledged to him. I have heard it declared by several electors - in fact it is the popular cry - that Mr Power's attempted trick is no go. Madden is the man for the people; for him the Catholic electors will plump to a man. 100

Power issued a Liberal address to the county. In it he stated that although he was virtually a stranger in the area, that he had come forward in the Liberal interest as there was no better known Liberal in the field. As regard policies, he advocated extension of the franchise in the English counties, Irish boroughs and Irish counties to a similar footing to that of the English boroughs. He also favoured reform of the Grand Jury Laws, denominational education, extension of the Land Act to increase security of tenure, reduction of taxation, and "support of the statesman who has risked and done so much to improve

98 Donnelly's Diary, 31 January, 1874.

99 Ibid, 1 February, 1874.

100 Ulster Examiner, 3 February, 1874, p 3.

the condition of all classes and creeds . . . and to do justice to Ireland."¹⁰¹ Finally, with regard to Home Rule, Power pledged to,

. . . do all that may become an honest man to restore to Ireland the immediate rule over all business which can be better done at home; I would abolish the party nominee, the Lord Lieutenant replacing him by a Prince of the Royal Blood, representing not a party, but her Majesty the Queen; I would uncompromisingly oppose any step which might, directly or indirectly, lead to dismemberment of the Empire.

102

Power's address was a very orthodox Liberal party manifesto, similar to any which might be produced in England. The extreme veneration for the leader of the party was not unusual in England, but after the poor showing he had made in 1873 over the Catholic university question, it was surprising that such veneration should raise its head in Ireland where the Liberal party supporters were most likely to be Catholics.

Power's candidacy was a short-lived affair. His address was published in the Northern Standard on February 7. On the same day, on the same page, on the next column, the same journal carried an advertisement to the effect that Power had decided to resign from the election due to the fact that he had been unable to get a replacement for his position as High Sheriff. However, he contended that he had had enough endorsements from all over the county to assure him that he would head the poll. He hoped that there might be a time when 'official obstruction and obsolete feudal obligations'¹⁰³ would no longer stand in the way of the county's choice of representative. In other words, Power was stating that he would contest the seat at the next general election. There is a suggestion that he had been purposely frustrated in his attempt to resign the office of High Sheriff, in which position he could not contest the seat. This was probably unlikely, as there was no likelihood of Madden retiring, and Power would only manage to split the Catholic vote and aid the Tories. Thus it would be surprising if the local gentry, almost exclusively Conservative, would not help Power in his search for a replacement.

101 Northern Standard, 7 February, 1874, p 2.

102 Ibid.

103 Ibid.

In its comments upon the Power campaign the Northern Standard was of the opinion that if Power could have come forward he would have received a very large support from the Catholics of the county. However, his policies, that of complete support for Gladstone would not have had great favour with anyone in Monaghan.

Home Rulers, Tenant Righters, and Conservatives if they differ on most other subjects agree on denouncing the policy of the People's William. From different points of view their opinions of his political acts are anything but flattering.

104

The problem which Power did not recognise, of course, was that whereas Ireland was part of the United Kingdom, and the major parties in the country were organised on both sides of the Irish sea, yet the party politics of Ireland were a different breed to that of Great Britain. A Liberal in Ireland had to concern himself with different issues from his counterpart in England. Power's address was too orthodox Liberal, too English, for him to have any great chance.

Apart from Power, it was also reported that a James Kelly of Lisalea House, Newbliss, was also to come forward as a Home Rule Liberal.¹⁰⁵ Kelly was a landlord in county Cavan who had recently moved to Monaghan and was extremely popular in that county. Apart from the report in the Freeman's Journal, the Northern Standard carried a report of an address and presentation which was made to him the week before in recognition of his actions in Cavan. Whether this was preliminary to an election address is unclear; in any case, no address appeared. On the Conservative side it was also reported that Derrick Westenra would contest the seat.¹⁰⁶ However, as Westenra was only 21 years old, this was probably never likely.

Monday, 2 February was a fair day in Monaghan town. Madden was there and addressed a large assembly of electors.¹⁰⁷ The following day Madden travelled to Carrickmacross for the first time. He had been gradually approaching the barony of Farney with meetings in Ballybay

104 Ibid.

105 Freeman's Journal, 4 February, 1874, p 3.

106 Ulster Examiner, 2 February, 1874, p 4.

107 Madden's Diary, 2 February, 1874.

and Castleblayney, but he had not ventured into the heart of it yet. He recorded in his diary that the people were enthusiastic in his favour¹⁰⁸ and he made arrangements to hold a reception in the town on Nomination Day, 5 February.

On the same day as Madden was addressing the Catholic electors of Carrickmacross the Orangemen of Monaghan were holding a special meeting of the Grand Lodge to consider the action to be taken. The Orangemen of Ireland had turned their faces strongly against Home Rule. However, in Monaghan, as we have seen, the alienation from Westminster had been considerably more pronounced than in other parts of the island. Furthermore, the County Grand Secretary, George Knight, was acting as agent for John Madden, and the County Grand Master, William Wolseley Madden was a brother of the Home Rule candidate.

The Special Meeting of the Grand Lodge was held in Monaghan town. The chair was occupied by William Mitchell the Deputy Grand Master. William Madden had hardly been in the county since his release from prison, due partly to his absence in America and partly to the rapid deterioration of his health whilst he was incarcerated. Mitchell, his deputy, was a staunch Tory and the man who had been dismissed from the post of Deputy Sheriff by Thomas O'Hagan in 1869. The meeting was called after receipt of a requisition which called for direction as to which candidates the Orangemen should support. An address was then read to the Orangemen of Monaghan from William Wolseley Madden advising them to vote against any 'Home Rule' candidate. The meeting then adopted three resolutions. The first stated that the Grand Lodge of Monaghan had,

. . . full confidence in Messrs Leslie and Shirley the Conservative candidates, and earnestly impresses upon the Loyal Orangemen of this county the necessity of faithfully discharging their duty by using every legitimate means in their power to secure their return to the Imperial Parliament. 109

The second resolution expressed the delight of the County Grand Lodge at the fall of 'that Radical Government that has so long opposed

108 Ibid, 3 February, 1874.

109 Report of Special Meeting of County Grand Lodge of Monaghan, 3 February, 1874, in Monaghan County Minutes, pp 203-204.

the Protestant interest, and pandered to the claims of Popery.' It continued that the Orangemen were pledged to the return of those candidates who would oppose Catholic measures in Westminster whether they be in the guise of 'Home Rule' or denominational education. The third resolution, and perhaps the most important, stated that all Worshipful Masters of Orange Lodges were to ascertain if any of their members supported the Home Ruler either in a canvass or by voting, and unless there be a good excuse that the most stringent measures be taken against such transgressors.

The address from William Madden which was read to the special meeting of the County Grand Lodge was also published in the Northern Standard. The document, in the form of a letter, stated that Madden had read in the London Globe that John MacMahon was about to address the county as a Home Rule candidate. It reminded the 'well-tried, oft-proved and never-defeated Orangemen of Monaghan' that in 1865 there had been considerable bloodshed when a Catholic mob had attempted to stop the Conservative supporters from voting, and that in 1868 James Clarke had been murdered. William Madden then requested that the Orangemen should

. . . come forward and quit yourselves like men at the approaching Election for our county. Let it not be said of the Orangemen of Monaghan, that any Home Ruler, whatever his rank, shall ever succeed in obtaining a place in the British House of Parliament, through any assistance on your part. 110

The address then continued by suggesting that the Home Rule movement was backed up by the Fenians of Ireland and America. He concluded by challenging Isaac Butt, the MP for Limerick, to,

. . . tell us what has become of Orange Warrant No 1817, of which he was formerly Master in the City of Dublin.

That Warrant was issued to him on the 14th November, 1835, and how has he fulfilled his trust as Master of that Trinity College Orange Lodge. 111

This address must have caused a very considerable amount of chagrin on the part of the county Master's brother, the Home Rule candidate.

110 'Address to the Orangemen of Monaghan' in Northern Standard, 7 February, 1874, p 2.

111 Ibid.

Not only had he appealed for the Orangemen not to aid the cause of the Home Rule candidate (although without naming him) he had also suggested that the Fenians were deeply involved in supporting the movement. The reference to James Clarke would remind the Orangemen that he had been murdered by a Fenian, and this would lessen the appeal of a man who had their endorsement. But the most significant phrase in the denouncement of the Home Rule candidacy in Monaghan was 'what ever his rank.' There could be little doubt that he was directly appealing against his brother. There was a tacit suggestion to the Orange tenants upon the Madden estate that they need not vote for their landlord. The allusion to Butt's earlier Orange career indicated that mixing in nationalist politics could corrupt even a Master of an Orange Lodge.

The suggestion in William Madden's address that the Fenians supported the campaign of his brother was underlined by the assentors who signed John Madden's nomination papers. After a very successful meeting in Castleblayney on 4 February, Madden went to Monaghan Court House on the following day at 1.00 pm for the nomination. His paper was signed by W F De V Kane¹¹² and seconded by Peter Fitzpatrick.¹¹³ The assentors were Peter McPhillips of Monaghan, Matthew G Rush of Monaghan, Richard Henry of Clones, William O'Reilly of Clones, Peter Donnelly of Clones, Francis Fitzgerald of Glencorn, Edward Fay Donnelly of Monaghan and James Blayney Rice of Leitrim.

The proposer was a Protestant landowner, the seconder a Catholic. Of the assentors, Peter McPhillips had been one of the two jurors who had heard Butt's petition against the Monaghan assize in 1869. Matthew Rush was one of the most prominent members of the Catholic community in the town. Richard Henry was a Protestant from Clones, O'Reilly

112 William Francis de Vismes Kane of Drumreaske, Son of Joseph Kane and Madlle, Eliza-Jane De Vismes, daughter of Colonel the Count De Vismes of the Coldstream Guards. In 1862 William Kane married Amelia-Maria-Jane Hamilton of Yorkshire. An entymologist and a botanist of distinction, he was a member of the Royal Irish Academy. He wrote a large number of books and pamphlets, his most famous being his Catalogue of European Butterflies and his Handbook of European Butterflies.

113 Peter Fitzpatrick was from Cormeen, Aughnamullen in the baroney of Cremorne. He was a prominent Catholic in south-east Monaghan and his signing of the form indicated support from that part of the county for Madden's candidature.

and Peter Donnelly were prominent Catholics also from Clones, and associated with the Liberal party during the 1880 general election, Fitzgerald was a Protestant former Town Councillor for Clones,¹¹⁴ Edward Fay Donnelly was active in Liberal politics in the county whilst James Blayney Rice was one of the most notorious Fenians in south Ulster. The presence of his name on the assentors' list tended to reinforce what William Madden had stated in his letter.

John Leslie was proposed by Edward Lucas of Castleshane and seconded by James Hamilton of Cornacassa House. Lucas was one of the most prominent landlords in the Conservative interest in the county. Hamilton was the son of Dacre Hamilton who had been a notorious landagent and had gathered together an estate on the outskirts of the county town by evicting tenants during the first two decades of the nineteenth century. Leslie's assentors were all Protestants. Surprisingly only one of them was a member of the Orange Institution; this was William Magennis of Glassdrummond, Monaghan.¹¹⁵ Of the others, Thomas Coote of Raconnell House was the major figure of 1869, James Mohan Ross was a Presbyterian solicitor and a prominent Liberal, whilst the others, Andrew K Young, James Whitla, Robert Graham, and Harry Rogers all from Monaghan town were not prominent. The same may be said of Nathan Milligan of Drumghost.

S E Shirley was proposed by Sir George Forster of Coolderry, Carrickmacross, a neighbour and the former MP. He was seconded by John Madden of Rosslea Manor. This indicated that William was not the only member of the Madden family to have broken with John Madden over his politics. The Rosslea Maddens were a somewhat less affluent branch of the family; the two John Maddens were first cousins. The Rosslea Maddens held their land on fee farm grants from the Board of Trinity College Dublin, granted in 1856.¹¹⁶ Much of the land was on the foothills

114 Livingstone, The Monaghan Story, p 543.

115 William Magennis was a prominent Orangeman in the Monaghan area. He was Worshipful Master of LOL 367 in 1867. He was District Master of Monaghan District, 1865-1869, and on the Grand Committee of the County Grand Lodge, 1869-1871.

116 TCD Muniments Book, MUN/P/24/524, Report on the Madden Estate.

of Slieve Beaght. The land was poor, frequently flooded, overcrowded and poorly run.¹¹⁷

Of the rest of the names on Shirley's form, only Edward Richardson of Poplar Vale, Thomas Coote of Raconnel and H G Brooke of Castleblayney were Protestants. The others were all Catholics from south Monaghan. Joseph McAskie was from Castleblayney, but the rest, James McDonald, Patrick Devin and Patrick Keelan were from Carrickmacross whilst Thomas McEvoy Gartlan from Moynalty, outside the town was a well known 'gombeen man' farming a large farm on the Shirley estate, as well as owning a public house and a store on the main street of Carrickmacross. Gartlan later became the head of the Farney Tenant Defence Association and a prominent Land Leaguer in south Ulster.

Shirley's ability to attract Catholic assentors to his cause was a public demonstration of the way in which his Catholic tenants in Farney supported him. Madden stated that he could only win if he had the support of the Catholics of the county. It had been the reticence of the Catholics of Farney to support him in 1871 which had motivated him to retire from the contest. Shirley, for his part, had to attract the Catholics of his immediate locality. Leslie was reasonably safe as there were almost enough Protestant votes in his area to see him elected. If Shirley's Catholic vote was to desert him for Madden then he would have had virtually no chance of being returned.

The Freeman's Journal reported the events of nomination; it concluded with the statement, 'His return is a certainty.'¹¹⁸ The Ulster Examiner also reported that Madden's return was 'a certainty.'¹¹⁹ The Northern Standard, however, was not so sure. It reported that because the Home Rulers had been unable to get rid of Madden they had decided to make the most of a bad bargain,¹²⁰ and were now working with a

¹¹⁷ MUN/P/24/525, reported a dismal view of the estate. In 1886 Athol J Dudgeon of Orange Committee was made agent, eventually agreement was reached and £7,000 arrears were wiped out.

¹¹⁸ Freeman's Journal, 6 February, 1874, p 3.

¹¹⁹ Ulster Examiner, 6 February, 1874, p 3.

¹²⁰ Northern Standard, 7 February, 1874, p 2.

will on his behalf. The Standard also seized upon an editorial in the Belfast Examiner (in fact, it was the Ulster Examiner) to the effect that the Home Rulers were almost invariably Catholics and that the few Protestants in the movement were of little importance in deciding the policy to be followed. The leader writer used this statement to argue against Madden 'the thin edge of the Home Rule wedge,' and to remind the readers that there was no point in dividing the vote with Madden. Only total victory was wanted. The paper then reproduced a facsimile of the ballot paper complete with two 'X's beside the names of Shirley and Leslie. On the same page was the report of Corry and Johnston's victory in Belfast over the Liberal challengers, McClure and Rea.

After the nomination was completed Madden and his supporters headed for a reception in Carrickmacross. The function was held in O'Neill's Hotel in the town, and afterwards Madden addressed an enormous crowd from the window of the hotel.¹²¹ The following day was market-day in Clones and Madden and Leslie both canvassed the electors in that town. Madden reported that he was well received in the area and, notwithstanding the appeal both of the County Lodge and of his brother, that feeling towards him was better among the Orange party than it had been.¹²² On Saturday, 7 February Madden toured the north of the county and spoke at meetings in Emyvale and Scotstown.¹²³

As in the previous week Madden felt that it would be better not to hold any meetings on the Sunday. On Monday he spent all day in Monaghan town. That evening he addressed a large meeting in the town.¹²⁴ The following evening a similar exercise was undertaken in the county town, only this time it was addressed by Mr John Clarke Adams of Armagh. He spent most of the evening explaining the secret ballot.¹²⁵ Presumably this was felt necessary so as to persuade the electors that they need no

121 Madden's Diary, 5 February, 1874.

122 Ibid, 6 February, 1874.

123 Ibid, 7 February, 1874.

124 Northern Standard, 14 February, 1874, p 2.

125 Freeman's Journal, 11 February, 1874, p 3.

longer fear landlord reaction. Adams also pointed out that as Madden would receive no emolument for sitting in the House of Commons that the electors should repay him by returning him at the head of the poll. The Northern Standard reported that Adams was a dreadful speaker and that in any case the most of his audience were non-voters.¹²⁶

On the day before the poll, Madden visited Castleblayney, Clontibret and Monaghan town. While at Castleblayney he was met by a delegation from the Home Rule League in Dublin.¹²⁷ The delegation consisted of Isaac Butt and Rev Galbraith. It had been reported that they would address a meeting in Monaghan town that evening but this did not take place.¹²⁸ However, Butt and Galbraith, along with Adams and Peter Tierney of Monaghan, spent the polling day in the county working for Madden, and Butt especially, performed sterling work on his behalf. Presumably Butt was repaying the debt he owed Madden from 1871 when the latter had spent polling day working for him.

The Conservatives were surprisingly quiet. It is impossible to ascertain from the columns of the Northern Standard whether Shirley was even in the county. No doubt he was, but there are no reports of the Conservatives holding any meetings whatsoever. The Standard reported that they confined themselves to perfecting their minor arrangements (as for the election and to an extensive canvass of the several districts.¹²⁹ The local Orange organisation was pledged to support Leslie and Shirley, and it was generally accepted that most Protestants would vote for the Conservative candidates. The Conservative hand had also been strengthened by the fact that the clergy were absent from the hustings. On 5 February Leslie had called on Donnelly to pay his respects, and Donnelly recorded,

I said wd not lift my finger for any one - Wd fight with energy if had a proper candidate.

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¹²⁶ Northern Standard, 14 February, 1874, p 2.

¹²⁷ Madden's Diary, 11 February, 1874.

¹²⁸ Northern Standard, 14 February, 1874, p 2; Ulster Examiner, 11 February, 1874, p 3.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Donnelly's Diary, 5 February, 1874.

The refusal of the Catholic clergy to support Madden was a telling blow to his chances. In the neighbouring constituency of Cavan, for example, the clergy played an active part in the campaign of the two Home Rule candidates, Joseph Gillis Biggar and Charles James Fay. Biggar arrived in the county with a written recommendation signed by Dr Dorrian, bishop of Down and Connor. At the major selection meeting, the chair was occupied by Most Rev Dr Conaty, Lord Bishop of Kilmore, and the motion that Biggar and Fay be accepted as the Home Rule candidates for the county was seconded by Rev Patrick O'Reilly, PP of Drumline. Their nomination papers were signed by Bishop Conaty and also by Very Rev Francis O'Reilly, Vicar-General, and Very Rev John O'Reilly, Vicar-Foreign. And finally the day before polling the bishop issued a pastoral calling on the electors of Cavan to return only a Home Ruler.¹³¹ This was the sort of action the executive of the Home Rule League had hoped for when it had issued its 'Address to the Electors of Ireland,' when it stated,

To the clergy we appeal with respectful confidence to take their place with those people with whom their interests are inseparably united. 132

Unfortunately this would not be the case in Monaghan.

One action which had been taken at Westminster since the last election had been to increase the number of polling places. Whereas before, all polling took place in Monaghan town, now Monaghan county had twelve polling stations. These were spread throughout the county at Ballybay, Ballytrain, Castleblayney and Carrickmacross in the south-east, Clones, Newbliss and Rockcorry in the south-west, Clontibret, Monaghan and Scotstown in central Monaghan, and Emyvale and Glasslough in the north.¹³³ This policy, previously suggested by the Conservatives, greatly helped in discouraging the assembling of large and unruly mobs. The contest was one of the quietest ever recorded in Monaghan. Donnelly noted that the town was very quiet, "- would not know in Shambles or Dublin St that election was going on."¹³⁴

¹³¹ See Ulster Examiner, 27, 30 January, 5 and 7 February, 1874.

¹³² This address was carried in all the nationalist papers; see for example, Ulster Examiner, 27 January, 1874, p 4.

¹³³ Freeman's Journal, 3 February, 1874, p 2.

¹³⁴ Donnelly's Diary, 12 February, 1874.

Polling was reported to be brisk through the early part of the morning. By 2.00 pm most of the voters had cast their votes and there was little activity from that hour until the polls closed at 7.00 pm. At around this hour Madden addressed the crowd from the window of his committee rooms in the town and informed them that he was confident that he had been elected.¹³⁵ And his view was held by the nationalist press. The Freeman's Journal claimed that Madden was victorious,

. . . from Farney district alone, it is said, he received over 500 votes. There are great complaints as to some of the appointments in the booths. 136

The counting of votes was undertaken the following morning under the scrutiny of the High Sheriff, Sir William Tyrone Power, the Sub-Sheriff, William Mitchell and the assessor, John Richardson, BL. As early as 10.00 am a crowd started to gather at the steps of the Court-house in Monaghan Diamond. This gradually built up during the morning and by 2.00 pm the whole centre of the town was packed awaiting the declaration of the poll. This was announced at 2.30 pm by the High Sheriff, not in the normal manner, but by affixing a notice to the front of the building. The result was,

LESLIE	C	2,481
SHIRLEY	C	2,417
MADDEN	HR	2,105

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There were 46 spoiled votes, the total poll was 4,686 out of a register of 5,559.¹³⁸ This makes a poll of 84.3%. The votes received by each of the candidates, when reduced to a percentage of the total possible vote,¹³⁹ records a percentage vote for Leslie of 26.47%, for Shirley a percentage vote of 25.79%, whilst Madden received 22.46%. Madden was only 312 votes behind Shirley. He had come close to unseating the incumbent Conservative. However, this was not enough. He had missed, and it was unlikely that he would have the opportunity of receiving another chance.

135 Northern Standard, 14 February, 1874, p 2.

136 Freeman's Journal, 13 February, 1874, p 3.

137 Walker, Parliamentary Election Results in Ireland, p 305.

138 Northern Standard, 14 February, 1874, p 2.

139 As there were two vacancies and each voter had the right to record two votes, the total possible vote was 9,372; that is, the total poll of 4,686 multiplied by two.

CHAPTER VI

'Old men whose lives were not worth two days
purchase, were brought to the booths on carts'

The Liberal Landslide, 1880

The 1874 general election has been described as "the most spectacular election held in Ireland since the union."¹ And there was ample evidence that the contests of that year marked a radical change in the open affiliation of Ireland's representatives at Westminster. However, it must be remembered that when the election was called there was no Home Rule Parliamentary Party per se, and that many of the Home Rule MPs elected in 1874 had been Liberals up to a short period before the election. Less than one-half of the MPs had attended the Home Rule Conference at the end of 1873, and of this number, (25), only Butt, Blennerhassett, Martin and Smyth had been elected on a Home Rule ticket. It could be further pointed out that John Martin never sat in the House of Commons, was unhappy with constitutional nationalism and died the following year; whilst Blennerhassett hardly functioned as a Home Rule MP in parliament, being almost invariably responsive to the Tory party whip.

It would be more accurate to describe the significance of the 1874 election in terms of anti-Tory voting. That is, to take cognisance of the decline in the number of seats held by Conservatives.² And whereas the decline in Conservatives between the general elections of 1868 and 1874 was only six seats, if one looks at the decade from the elections of 1865 to 1874 the decline is more marked. In 1865 Ireland returned 47 Tories, by 1874 this number had fallen to 33. In addition, many of the

1 McCaffrey, 'Home Rule and the General Election of 1874,' p 207.

small pockets of rural Conservatism present in 1865 in the three southern provinces had disappeared at the 1868 election.³ This process was to continue its inexorable march north at the election of 1874 when the Liberals gained ground in Ulster.

The parliamentary representation of the province of Ulster deserves closer examination. In 1865 Ulster returned 27 Conservatives and two Liberals; in 1868 the Liberals had doubled their representation. The 1874 election saw six Liberals and two Home Rulers returned along with 21 Conservatives. The Conservatives' loss of almost one-quarter of their seats in Ulster from 1865 to 1874 was most significant. The various factors have already been discussed, and the Secret Ballot can be overestimated as a cause of this decline. It was more the slight lowering of the restriction plus the universal demand within the province for a just solution to the land question which affected the Tories.

Of the four seats held by the Liberals in 1868, Belfast, Londonderry City, Newry and county Cavan, two of them had been lost in by-elections between 1868 and 1874. In January 1871 the Liberal MP for Newry died and he was replaced by a Conservative, the Viscount Newry and Mourne. In November 1872 Richard Dowse was appointed baron of the exchequer and the seat was regained for the Tories by C E Lewis. Thus, only two Liberals were defending their seats in 1874: Thomas McClure who was defeated in Belfast, and Captain Edward Saunderson who met a similar fate in Cavan. This means that the six Liberals returned for Ulster constituencies in 1874 were all at the expense of Conservatives. Newry was won back from Viscount Newry and Mourne by William Whitworth, Dungannon was captured for the first time by Thomas A Dickson from Col Hon W S Knox and Coleraine was captured by Daniel Taylor for the first time since 1835. Outside the boroughs James Sharman Crawford, a son of Sharman Crawford, the veteran tenant right leader, defeated Col William B Forde in county Down. Whereas in County Londonderry the Liberal candidates, Hugh Law, the Irish Attorney General and Professor Richard Smith, a former Moderator of the General Assembly, captured both seats from the Tories.

³ For an analysis of the Home Rule MPs see, Thornley, Isaac Butt and Home Rule, pps 195-204.

In addition to these victories the Liberal candidates had come close to success in Derry City, Enniskillen, Donegal and Antrim.⁴ In fact, in county Antrim, it was initially announced that the Liberal, Charles Wilson, had been victorious.⁵ Another feature of the 1874 results was that the Conservatives had won three seats with candidates who had decidedly Liberal leanings.

In Belfast William Johnston retained his seat, this time with the Conservative nomination, but he advocated 'Liberal' policies and was supported by the same class of voters as were Liberal candidates in all the major cities in the United Kingdom. Similarly, in Carrickfergus Marriot R Dalway who had opposed the Tory nominee in 1868 was again returned. Dalway was in a similar position to that of Johnston. He was an Independent and Orange candidate in 1868 but a Conservative nominee in 1874. In addition, Dalway had been expelled from the Orange Institution. Also, four lodges in Carrickfergus were suspended for endorsing the Independent Orange Association which had recently been founded in Ballymoney and was Liberal party orientated.⁶ Lastly, J W E Macartney, the victorious candidate in county Tyrone, although generally regarded as a Conservative, had been the nominee of the tenant farmers, was an Orangeman, and may be placed in the same category as Johnston and Dalway.⁷

Needless to say, the Liberal press was ecstatic about the results. The Freeman's Journal reported that Ulster now had nine Liberal MPs.⁸ This number was presumably made up by the six orthodox Liberals, the two Home Rulers and Macartney, the tenant right Tory. The Ulster Examiner reported 19 Conservative MPs in Ulster after the election, perhaps

⁴ In Derry City C E Lewis beat B McCorkell 744-715, in Enniskillen Viscount Crichton beat Captain Collum 192-172, in Donegal Thomas Connolly held the second seat with 1866 votes, whilst Kennedy got 1826, in Antrim O'Neill got 4142 votes for the second seat to Wilson's 4009.

⁵ McElroy, Route Land Crusade, p 27.

⁶ Reports Grand Orange Lodge, Enniskillen, 1, 2 June, 1870, p 8.

⁷ Macartney's victory was at the expense of Lord Claud Hamilton, a Conservative.

⁸ Freeman's Journal, 14 February, 1874, p 2.

attributing the victories of Macartney and Dalway as being anti-Tory.⁹ With regard to county Monaghan the same journal noted that that constituency had "only to be fairly fought and two representatives of a sterling type - Home Rulers even - can be returned."¹⁰

The Conservative losses were a subject of discussion in the Tory press also. The Dublin Evening Mail, for example, claimed that the collapse in Ulster was not a result of a cry for tenant right, nor yet a cry for Home Rule, rather it was a result of,

. . . that very reliance that all was safe, the vanity of which is now mourned over. Security is mortal's chiefest enemy, and security is the cause of the disruption of the old political ties in the northern counties . . . The very foundation of the security that was formerly felt, in Ulster as elsewhere, has been entirely sapped by the ballot. If the gentry of the country desire to keep their hold upon the affections of the electors they must maintain a place in their confidence by frequent and continual intercourse, dwelling among them and working with them. ¹¹

The Mail recognised that the affections of the Protestant tenant farmers would not be alienated simply by the introduction of secret voting. However, it was also aware that the landlords would henceforward be unable to ensure that they received support from their tenants and other co-religionists. They would have to maintain their place in the confidence of the voters by 'continual intercourse' and by dwelling and working among them. And this was the major effect of the Ballot Act. That is, by removing the compulsion on the voters to support the Protestant gentry, it placed the relationship of Protestant voter to Protestant landlord upon a modern, democratic and logical basis. Proto-feudal affection might still play a part in the electoral process, but it could no longer be counted upon. In the aftermath of the 1874 general election, the modern party political system in Ireland came into being.

On Saturday, 14 February, the Northern Standard issued an appeal to the Protestants and Conservatives of the county to form a Constitutional

⁹ Ulster Examiner, 19 February, 1874, p 2.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Dublin Evening Mail, 10 February, 1874, p 2.

club. It would only require three or four gentlemen of position to call a meeting, it suggested, and the venture could be started, "to secure the cordial co-operation of all classes of Protestant in the county."¹² The late election had indicated that the want of a proper organisation "and the culpable neglect of the Revision Courts" had placed the position of the Conservative members of Monaghan in jeopardy. Thus it was essential to form,

. . . a Conservative club, having its head office in Monaghan with a branch association in every town in the county. The members of this club would make it their business on the occasion of a contested election to look after all the Protestant voters in their several polling districts . . . In the event of a contested election being at hand, it would be necessary to summon the different committees appointed in each district for that purpose to meet and consult for the selection of candidates. Such a course, if adopted, would give the people an interest in working for the candidates selected which could be secured in no other way. The time is passed when such an association can be confined to the aristocratic element. Recent events fully prove that the rank and file of our communities are the only real power in the state.

13

This editorial formed the basis of the Monaghan Conservative and Constitutional club which was founded on the following Thursday evening. At that meeting, held after the meeting of the Grand Jury had broken up, Lord Rossmore took the chair and it was agreed that a minimum subscription would be ten shillings.¹⁴ It was a reasonable compromise to have the inaugural meeting of the new grouping held privately by the leading aristocrats. It was they who had organised the Conservative voters in the county since the Act of Union. The meeting of those members of the Grand Jury who were favourable to the Conservative cause was almost a symbolic opening of the door to the ordinary Protestants of the county into the local political decision making process. It was also significant that the meeting should be chaired by Lord Rossmore. He was, after all, the leader of one of the most prominent Liberal families in the county. His chairmanship of the meeting was an indication

12 Northern Standard, 14 February, 1874, p 2.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid, 21 February, 1874, p 2.

that he had officially joined the Conservatives. In any case, there had been no Liberal candidate in the constituency since the ill-fated Gray campaign in 1868. Rossmore had closed ranks with his social peers against the threat of the new radicalism.

The alliance of Protestant and Catholic over the tenant right issue had alarmed the Conservatives in Ulster. Clearly, there could be little hope for Conservative candidates even in Ulster if they were to oppose much needed reforms. An alliance between Protestant and Catholic tenant farmers in the counties, or Orange and Green artisans in Belfast would have disastrous effect upon the ability of that party to return candidates. There was also the fear that Protestants who were aiding the radical platform by splitting the Protestant vote were the unwitting tools of the nationalists. Thus, in Tyrone Macartney was accused of being a 'cat's-paw of the priests' by the Belfast Newsletter.¹⁵ Before the campaign had really got underway the same journal had issued its famous editorial,

In Antrim, Down, Armagh, Tyrone, Derry, in fact in every county in Ulster men have come forward under the guise of Home Rule or Tenant Right, or Home Rule and Tenant Right combined, with the view of putting the tenants against their landlords, of interrupting the friendly relations which have existed, in many cases since the plantation of Ulster, between the families owning, and the families occupying, the land. Now tenant farmers of Ulster, we shall speak plainly to you: Home Rule is simply Rome Rule. And if Home Rule were accomplished tomorrow, before that day week,¹⁶ Rome Rule would be evident.

The answer was clearly to establish county associations as suggested by the Northern Standard. An alternative, or perhaps complimentary action, might be to utilise the Orange Institution to maintain political power. In the face of the sweeping Home Rule victories in the three southern provinces, and the defeat of a significant number of Conservative candidates in Ulster, two things were clear. Firstly, the Liberal party in Ireland was on very shaky ground unless it went almost entirely Home Rule. (The defeat of the former Chief Secretary for Ireland, Right Honourable Chichester Fortescue in county Louth indicated how desperate

¹⁵ Belfast Newsletter, 5 February, 1874, cited in McCaffrey, 'Home Rule and the general election of 1874,' p 198.

¹⁶ Ibid, cited in McCaffrey, 'Irish Federalism in the 1870s,' p 18, n 16.

things were for the Liberal party.) Secondly, it was essential for the Protestant landlords to retain their links with the Protestant farmers and labourers. The victory in Belfast where Johnston was now firmly within the Tory fold, and McClure was defeated, indicated that Conservatism in Ulster could face such problems and succeed. The year 1868 had been a challenge to Belfast Conservatism and by 1874 it had met that challenge. However, 1874 also saw further challenges placed before the party. The loss of Coleraine and Dungannon was not so serious as it was clear that eventually such small constituencies would be disfranchised. More important was the Liberal string of victories in county Down and county Londonderry. Further, county Donegal might face a similar fate at the next election. The answer to the Conservatives' prayers in Belfast had been the close association of that party with the Orange Order. Perhaps that would also be the key to the county constituencies.

The Conservatives in such places as Monaghan were not the only ones to recognise the efficacy of forming a broadly based political machine in the constituencies. Shortly after the election the Catholics in the constituency also decided to form a political organisation. There was an obvious void. The Conservative party was exclusively Protestant. Up to date the prime movers in the Home Rule movement were not altogether satisfactory in the eyes of the Catholic Church. At the last election, for example, Bishop Donnelly, although an avowed nationalist, had not even voted.¹⁷ The Liberal party in the county, on the other hand, had not fielded a candidate since 1868, and in that year the choice of candidate had not appealed to the Catholics of the county. Not since the victory of Lord Cremorne in 1865 had both the Catholic population and the Catholic clergy had a candidate which they could unequivocally support.

The meeting of the Catholic electors was held in the Christian Brothers School, Monaghan. The circular convening the meeting spoke of the necessity to organise the Catholics in the constituency so as to

¹⁷ Donnelly's Diary, 12 February, 1874.

ensure that they be properly represented in the future. The letter claimed,

The experience of the last, as well as previous elections for this county, has shown the necessity there is for some better system of organisation among the Catholic body, in order to give effect to our undoubted strength. Acting under this conviction, the leading Catholics of Monaghan have taken counsel together, and have resolved, with the approbation of the Bishop and clergy here to call together a meeting consisting of the priests and some prominent Catholic laymen from each parish in the county.

It is proposed to hold this meeting in the Christian Schoolroom, Monaghan, on Tuesday, the 3rd of March, and your presence thereat is earnestly desired. 18

The meeting was chaired by Bishop Donnelly and it was decided to call the new association the County Monaghan Liberal Association. Resolutions were passed and a subscription list opened. Donnelly paid £5 towards expenses and this started the fund off. After the meeting was over they went to a hotel for dinner. The chair was taken by Plunkett Kenny and perhaps he entertained the party. In any case, Kenny was particularly anxious to enter politics, and as a Catholic landowner¹⁹ his best chance lay in the organisation of the Catholic electors of the county. And although the association took the name Monaghan Liberal Association, it was instigated by the Catholic Bishop, inaugurated in the Catholic school, and composed of Catholics. The Liberal party nomination would be decided by this organisation in conjunction with a number of others at subsequent elections. The Monaghan Liberal Association took the place of the Whig landlords in the county in the selection of a suitable anti-Tory candidate. Their role in the selection process had all but ceased. The Dartreys took nothing more to do with politics.²⁰ The other large Liberal family, the Rossmores, decided to join the Conservatives.

18 PRONI, Rushe Papers, Mic 426/1, Monaghan Liberal Association circular, 20 February, 1874. With a Catholic majority on the register the Bishop had decided that the time was now ripe for the Catholics of the county to decide who would represent Monaghan at Westminster in the future.

19 On Kenny's political ambitions see above Ch IV, p 236. The family owned, 1,867 acres at Inniskeen in south-east Farney.

20 PRONI, D 1071/1/3/2, Lady Augusta Dartrey to Lord Dufferin, 25 February, 1874, predicted the breakup of the Liberal party. She also stated that the family's agent had worked very hard for Chichester Fortescue in the county Louth contest.

All of this activity took place in the wake of the 1874 election. The obvious question is where did this organisational revolution leave the defeated Home Rule candidate? The Catholics had decided to constitute their own political organisation. Madden and his Orange Home Rulers would hardly be welcome there. On the other hand, the new Constitutionalist club was a popular manifestation of county Conservatism. Madden would be similarly unwelcome there, having performed the role of the priests' cat's-paw but two weeks before. Madden, in fact, was completely out on his own. On 26 February it was announced that he had been elected onto the executive of the Home Rule League.²¹ So his defeat had not left him alienated from the organisation for which he had risked so much. But Donnelly's formation of a Catholic Liberal association had seriously out-manoeuvred Madden. He could only record in his diary,

Meeting of Monaghan Liberal Association Club held in Monaghan
(as I hear) this evening to form a registration society etc. 22

The election of 1874 had passed off most peacefully. However, that is not to say that it was without incident. The appointment of polling officers at each of the polling stations led to complaints from the Catholics that Conservatives were appointed in strongly Liberal areas. Or, in other words, that in some of the most Catholic parts of the constituency the Orangemen were in charge of the booths. The Freeman's Journal reported that there were a great number of complaints as to the appointments.²³ As a result, there were rumours immediately after the poll that there was to be a petition entered against the result. Butt had entered an objection to the appointment on the day before the poll, but it arrived too late for the High Sheriff, Sir William Tyrone Power to act upon.²⁴ In addition to the query over the appointment of polling officers in the Castleblayney area, there was also the fact that two other polling officers, Jimmy Feddes at Emyvale and a man named Graham had taken the boxes home with them after the

21 Ulster Examiner, 26 February, 1874, p 4.

22 Madden's Diary, 3 March, 1874.

23 Freeman's Journal, 13 February, 1874, p 3.

24 Power makes this point in a letter to Donnelly at the time of the 1880 election. See above, p 360.

close of the poll.²⁵

The Northern Standard noted that some of the Catholic party had impressed upon Madden to petition against the result.²⁶ The Standard predicted that if Madden was stupid enough to follow the advice and unseat the Conservatives that the priests would then choose an alternative candidate. One who would be endorsed by the Catholic bishop and receive the whole-hearted support of the electors of Farney. The editorial concluded by reminding its readers that Madden had expressed satisfaction with the conduct of the election and had stated that he would not be petitioning.

If Madden was prepared to let the matter rest, the same could not be said for Butt or the Dublin Home Rulers. On 27 February, Thomas E Knight of Monaghan replied that he could not get up a petition to unseat Shirley as he was ill.²⁷ The fact that the letter was dated 27 February, means that Butt must have written to Knight within the previous week, or less than two weeks after the declaration of the poll. Madden also wrote to Butt about the same matter on 6 March. In this letter he pointed out that he would be unable to undertake the expenditure which would be required 'wherein success must be so doubtful.'²⁸ And he continued,

Had people in Farney voted honestly as they led me to believe and as they said they would do, there would have been no trouble. I should have been long at the head of the poll. I got as I calculate from 600 to 700 Protestant votes certain - the failure of the Catholic vote in Farney defeated me - Now as to a petition it might unseat Mr Shirley and then I should have to stand another election and perhaps with the same result - so my decision is as people do not support me as they might and ought to have done, I cannot be expected to do all the work and pay all the cost over again . . .

29

25 Donnelly's Diary, 12 February, 1874.

26 Northern Standard, 28 February, 1874, p 2.

27 NLI, Butt Papers, MS8696(5), Thomas E Knight to Butt, 27 February, 1874.

28 MS8696(5) J Madden to Butt, 6 March, 1874,

29 Ibid.

Madden then continued that he had heard it suggested that some English gentleman had offered to pay one thousand pounds towards the cost of the election petition if he would then be supported as the Home Rule candidate if a new contest could be forced. Madden stated that he had already written to the Secretary of the Home Rule League to the effect that he would support this Englishman to the best of his ability.

Butt must have replied to the suggestion that the Catholics did not support Madden with disbelief, because the defeated candidate wrote again on 12 March to the same end - that the Home Rule vote failed in Farney. Indeed, each of his agents concurred with the view that the Catholics of Farney lost him the election. Madden then discussed the election petition. He had recorded in his diary that on Wednesday, 4 March, he had been informed of rumours in Monaghan to the effect that there was to be an election petition; however, he was unsure if they were correct.³⁰ The correspondence with Butt indicated that Madden was becoming completely isolated from the anti-Tory element in Monaghan.

There were two methods of petitioning against an election result. The most straightforward was in a document brought by one of the defeated candidates to the effect that undue influence, bribery, corruption or the threat of violence had been used to help one of the successful candidates. Madden's letter of 6 March indicates that while he was unwilling to enter a personal petition against the result, that he was quite happy to help challenge the result in the other method available. It was for a number of electors to bring a petition to the effect that they had been denied their votes, or that those votes were tampered with after they had polled. This method appears to have been the one employed in Monaghan once Madden indicated that he would not be petitioning personally.

It was the conduct of this petition by the Catholics of Monaghan which demonstrates Madden's alienation from the Catholic electoral organisation. On 11 March Madden saw in the newspapers that an election petition for Monaghan had been lodged, and that in addition,

³⁰ Madden's Diary, 4 March, 1874.

an amended petition had also been presented charging misconduct on the part of the Sheriff, the sub-Sheriff and the two MPs.³¹ In his letter to Butt on 12 March, Madden pointed out that the parties had not communicated with anyone in the Madden camp. He also continued that the major issue to be raised was the wrongful numbering of the ballot papers. That is, the papers should have been numbered from one to 5,500. However, they were accidentally numbered for each district. This meant that there could be 20 votes polled with the number 15 on them and there would be no way of proving their validity. This petition by the individual electors must have been handled by the County Monaghan Liberal Association. In any case, Butt was also in correspondence with Michael Moynagh of that association about the petition.³²

The various petitions were unsuccessful. Both Shirley and Leslie were able to retain their seats. However, the issue of corrupt practices had a twofold effect. On the one hand it proved to Madden that he had never really had the support of the Catholic hierarchy. Donnelly and his clergy were active in the new Monaghan Catholic Liberal organisation and they were deliberately excluding both Madden and his Protestant Helpers. Madden was probably wise not to contemplate a personal petition because it seems likely that if it had been successful he would have had opposition for the anti-Tory vote from a nominee of the new association. The other effect of the petition was the ill-feeling which it engendered between the Sheriff, Sir William Tyrone Power and the Catholic clergy, especially in the Castleblayney area. This would be a major element in the 1880 election campaign in the county.

Altogether 59 Home Rule MPs were returned to Westminster. On 3 March they met together to form a parliamentary party.³³ It would be wrong to regard the agreement reached at this meeting in terms of a modern political party, but it was generally agreed that the conference

31 Ibid, 11 March, 1874.

32 MS8696(6) Michael C Moynagh to Butt, 9 March, 1874.

33 In all, 46 MPs attended. Of the 12 absentees, 8 sent apologies whilst 4 made no contact. Three MPs never joined the party, whilst the O'Connor Don, N D Murphy and P J Smyth subsequently left it. See Thornley, Isaac Butt and Home Rule, p 212.

had, in pledging to take counsel of each others views and to make all reasonable concessions to them, gone as far as 'discretion demanded.'³⁴ The Home Rulers in Westminster, in other words, were a collection of individuals who would work in concert on Irish issues, but be free to follow the dictates of their consciences on other matters. This meant that in many ways the Home Rule party was a microcosm of the House of Commons with a constant conflict within its ranks between Whigs and Tories.³⁵

Within Westminster there was little business of Irish interest. At the reading of the Queen's speech, Butt tabled an amendment enquiring into the state of Ireland. The proposal to debate the position of Ireland was easily defeated. During the debate Lord Robert Montagu, supposedly a Home Rule MP for county Westmeath, objected to Butt's ploy. It was a harbinger of the constant disunion within the Irish ranks. The Home Rulers, however, were not to be defeated so easily and they decided to force a debate on Ireland. This was set for the end of June. The galleries were full, as was the floor of the House.³⁶ Amongst those in the gallery were three men whose careers were to include activities in Monaghan politics. From Australia came Sir Charles Gavan Duffy,³⁷ from Newcastle-on-Tyne came a youthful Tim Healy,³⁸ and from Clones came the recently defeated Home Rule nominee for the county, John Madden.³⁹ They did not see a victory, however, as only the Irish voted for the measure. In other words, of the 29 Radical MPs supposedly favourable to the demand for Irish self-government, only 10 voted in favour of Butt's motion that the House go into committee to discuss the issue of Home Rule. In fact, eight Radical

³⁴ This statement was made by one of the more radical Home Rule MPs, O'Connor Power, and cited in ibid, p 214.

³⁵ Frank Hugh O'Donnell lists 15 Tories in the Home Rule ranks, most of them Catholic aristocrats. He also points out that in some areas Irishmen voted for their landlord in 1874, but by 1880 were attacking them. See O'Donnell, A History of the Irish Parliamentary Party, (London, 1910), Vol I, Ch IV.

³⁶ Thornley, Butt and Home Rule, p 231.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Tim Healy, Letters and Leaders of my Day, (New York, 1929) pp 32-33.

³⁹ Madden's Diary, 30 June, 2 July, 1874.

MPs voted against even discussing the matter. It left little hope for the county or the country that they should receive Home Rule from Westminster.

In many ways the Home Rule Party in Westminster was to prove a disappointment to the Irish people at home. There was little activity towards the achievement of a national legislature. A considerable amount of time was spent in internal bickering. In fact, the MPs were playing an active role in the political process at Westminster. A significant number of bills relating to Irish reform was introduced into the house, but all but one were defeated. And whilst it is true that when the MPs returned to Ireland at the end of the session they were warmly received, nevertheless, the long process that parliamentary reform entails was not going to appease the advanced nationalists, nor those who wished the Irish members to undertake more decisive action in London.

If anything, the situation in parliament deteriorated during 1875. For much of the time Butt was absent due to ill-health and pecuniary embarrassments which forced him to continue his law practice. During the year there was no measure advocating Home Rule introduced, nor was the land question once again brought up. A number of measures to reform the Irish franchise were brought forward but they were all defeated. Only on the Coercion Bill did the Irish party rally together. On this occasion Biggar spoke for four hours. This novel innovation, frustration by means of the filibuster, gave rise to the tactic of 'obstruction.'⁴⁰ It was one which encapsulated the major differences between various parties with the Home Rule party. A M Sullivan apologised to the House for Biggar's behaviour;⁴¹ O'Connor Power and Major O'Gorman defended the Member for Cavan, whereas Isaac Butt was absolutely furious. On the second night of the debate on the committee stage of the Coercion Bill, almost unnoticed, a new member of the party took his place. He was Charles Stewart Parnell, the son of a Protestant

⁴⁰ The activities of the Home Rule MPs at Westminster during this period is discussed in Thornley, Isaac Butt and Home Rule, Ch VIII, O'Donnell, Irish Parliamentary Party, Chs IV, V, Healy, Letters and Leaders of my Day, Ch III, and McCaffrey, Irish Federalism in the 1870s, pps 24-27.

⁴¹ Thornley, Isaac Butt and Home Rule, p 256.

landlord from county Wicklow. He had been elected to serve in the place of John Martin for county Meath. Martin had never taken up his place in Westminster, always denying the efficacy of parliamentary activity prior to the foundation of a national parliament in Dublin. After his death, young Parnell had managed to persuade the clergy to back him in the contest as a Home Ruler. This being so he was returned, defeating the Conservative, 1,771 votes to 912. In addition, an independent nationalist received 138 votes.⁴²

Parnell was much impressed by Biggar's antics on the night in which he entered the parliament for the first time. On the following evening Parnell made his maiden speech. It was not a masterpiece of parliamentary oratory; indeed, it was an insignificant contribution to the furious debate which had ensued upon Biggar's actions the night before. Insignificant that is, with the exception of the last sentence. In words more reminiscent of John Martin himself than of the young man's previous activities, Parnell asked,

Why should Ireland be treated as a geographical fragment of England, as he had heard an ex-chancellor of the exchequer call it some time ago? Ireland was not a geographical fragment, but a nation.

43

Parnell was soon under the pupillage of Biggar, at that time still a member of the Supreme Council of the IRB, and by the end of the 1875 session the Home Rule party was falling apart. The Butt testimonial had proven a failure, primarily because the organisers were refused the right to make 'chapel-door appeal.' The following year, 1876, would see the mantle slip even further off Butt's shoulders.

While the Home Rule party was proving unsuccessful in its tactics at Westminster, at home, political life did not cease. The major question at home was still that of tenant right and land reform. The issue of Home Rule was left to the MPs at Westminster. The Irish population was still unhappy with the system of land tenure. In Monaghan it was an issue which excited both Protestant and Catholic farmers. Immediately after the election the Northern Standard carried

⁴² On Parnell's early political career, see, F S L Lyons, Charles Stewart Parnell, (London, 1977), Ch 2.

⁴³ Cited in Thornley, Isaac Butt and Home Rule, p 256.

a letter from a tenant farmer from Clontibret. In it he stated that he was a Conservative, but that he would not be joining the new Constitutional Association. His reason for this was that he could not join an organisation which had supported two MPs who had given only luke-warm support to the 1870 Land Act. In addition, he pointed out that neither of them had made any mention of the present state of landlord and tenant relations. The actions of Leslie and Shirley, he continued, were even more pronounced since the advent of the Secret Ballot had persuaded the rest of the Ulster Conservative MPs to become believers in land reform. The writer then continued with a discussion of the value of the tenant right on the farms of the county. In many places this was upwards of £30-35, yet the office rules only permitted tenant right to be sold for £5 per acre on the Rossmore estate, and £10 each on the Dartrey and Leslie properties. This had the effect of penalising the industrious tenants as they were unable to receive any more from the incoming tenant than the man who expended nothing on the farm. He concluded,

. . . I would ask the landlords of this county if there is anything unfair, or contrary to strict justice in what I have stated. If my views are honest and just, then, why should not our Conservative members take the wind out of the sails of the Home Rule agitators by adopting a programme which will secure them the support of the tenant farmers, who are determined to support none but those who will support them.

44

The editor of the Standard replied at the bottom of the letter with a claim that nowhere in the county did tenant right sell for the sum stated. In any case, the editor stated that there was no need for a Tenant Farmer Association as the committee of the Constitutional Association included men who were renowned as good landlords.

The committee of the Conservative & Constitutional Registration Association, which had been founded the previous week, was reproduced in the same edition of the Standard. In all, 17 names were listed. Of these, Lord Rossmore held 14,839 acres, E P Shirley had 26,386 acres, John Leslie MP had 13,621 acres, Edward Lucas, 9,955 acres, A A Murray-Ker, 3,605 acres, Lt-Col Lloyd, 999 acres, Captain Thomas Coote, 1,905 acres, Edward Richardson, 753 acres, John Madden of

44 Northern Standard, letter from 'Number One' on A Tenant Farmer's Society, 28 February, 1874, p 2.

Rosslea, 628 acres, Whitney Moutray 349 acres. That means that 10 of the 17 members of the committee had properties which ranged from very large farms to landed estates. Moutray, for example, was recorded as owning the more moderate holding. However, we should not lose sight of the fact that the Moutray family of Fort Singleton, Emyvale, was a cadet branch of the Moutray family of Favour Royal, Aughnacloy, which held very large estates in county Tyrone. Lloyd not only owned almost 1,000 acres himself; he was also the agent for the Rossmore property in Monaghan town. Thomas Coote was a member of the Monaghan branch of the Coote family which had extensive holdings in the east Cavan area around Cootehill. Of the remaining seven members of the committee, S E Shirley was the son of Evelyn Philip Shirley and the recently elected MP for the county. This leaves six names of men who were not members of prominent landowning families. Richard Mayne was from Newbliss. He was an agent for the Cole estates in that area as well as being a prominent Orangeman. H G Brooke was a solicitor from Castleblayney. Alexander Hamilton was also from Castleblayney. John Cunningham was from Glasslough. John T Holland was a sometime agent for Shirley. He lived in Carrickmacross and was vice chairman of the Workhouse Committee in that town. A K Young FRCSI was a medical doctor in Monaghan town and the Medical Officer to the county gaol and the Lunatic Asylum. He was a Justice of the Peace. All six men were Magistrates.⁴⁵ It can fairly be stated, then, that the Monaghan Constitutional Association was organised by the leading landlords and gentry in the county. The only surprising feature is that Mayne appears to have been the only active Orangeman of the 17. Lord Rossmore was to die within the month in a riding accident and his brother was to subsequently gain notoriety as an Orange leader. Thomas Coote had been an Orangeman but resigned from the Order some 15 years earlier. Whitney Moutray's son was the Worshipful Master of the Fort Singleton Orange Lodge, LOL 1952. Nevertheless, with the advent of the secret ballot it might have been expected that there would be a larger representation on the committee of members of the Orange Order in the county.

The Northern Standard's correspondent was not the only Monaghan citizen to contemplate the formation of a tenant association. Over

⁴⁵ Information about the committee has come from Ulster Directories, Burke's Landed Gentry, Monaghan County Orange Minutes and Bateson's Landowners of Ireland.

in the west of the county where landlord tenant relations had often been less than harmonious, there was talk of a tenant's association. The specific cause of the decision to form an association appears to have been the attempt by the agent on the Bath estate to persuade the tenants to contract out of the Land Act. That is, to become tenants-at-will and thus be excluded from the workings of that act.⁴⁶ It was later explained to the Bessborough Commission by Thomas Phelan, then Secretary of the Farney Defence Association that a court case was brought in 1874 by the agent on the Bath estate over the sale of tenant right on the estate. The court ruled that there was no tenant right in existence on the Bath property. Thereafter the agent drew up what was called the Bath Agreement To counteract this threat the Association was founded.⁴⁷ Thus a handbill was printed and posted throughout the barony of Farney calling for a public meeting. A preliminary meeting had been held in the Shirley Arms Hotel in Carrickmacross on Thursday, 21 May, and it had been agreed to organise a meeting of the tenantry of the barony for 2.00 pm in Carrickmacross.⁴⁸ The purpose of the meeting was to form a Tenants' Defence Association. The call was signed by 54 residents of Farney. Of these, 27 were tenants of the Shirley family, whilst the other 27 were presumably from the Bath estate.⁴⁹

At the meeting it was decided to inaugurate a Farney Tenants' Defence Association. The proceedings were chaired by Mr F Speers, a Protestant tenant on the Shirley estate. Also on the platform were Dean McMahon, PP of Carrickmacross, John Joey, PP of Magheracloone, Rev J McDonald (this was probably Rev James McDonnell, PP of Donaghmoyne), Rev C Connolly, curate of Donaghmoyne, Rev E Bartley, curate of

⁴⁶ Livingston, Monaghan Story, p 332.

⁴⁷ Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Working of the Landlord and Tenant (Ireland) Act, 1870, and the Amending Acts; with the Evidence, Appendices, and Index, HC 1881 (C 2779) Vol XIX, evidence of Thomas Phelan, p 430. Hereafter cited as Bessborough Commission.

⁴⁸ A copy of the handbill is contained in Farney Bubble Book, Vol IV, in the library at Lough Fea House, Carrickmacross. I have deposited a transcript of my notes in PRONI. See, D 3531/B, Shirley Papers.

⁴⁹ Ibid. Shirley marked in black ink a cross beside the names of 27 of the signatories. Presumably they were his tenants.

Carrickmacross, and Rev J Melney.⁵⁰ During the course of the meeting the Rev Bartley said,

. . . and if Catholic, Protestant, Presbyterian, unite, even now the power of England would tremble before them. (Cheers.) Even the Protestants were beginning to see that while leaning on the landlords, they were leaning on a broken reed, and were now standing shoulder to shoulder with their Catholic countrymen. If they received a notice to quit, they would receive support from their Catholic neighbours.

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Bartley was well known to be one of the most nationalist of the priests in the diocese.⁵² And his allusion to the Protestant tenants was a result of the surprising number of Protestants in this overwhelmingly Catholic locality who were involved in the movement. The Protestants, especially Henry Overend of Lurganboys, remained active in the Farney Defence Association, as it became known. The chairman was Thomas McEvoy Gartlan, who had signed the assentors' form for S E Shirley at the election in February.⁵³

Throughout Ulster there was a growth in the number of tenants' societies. In March, 1874, the Weekly Northern Whig brought out a supplement called the 'Tenant Farmer.' Principally, this was a result of the nebulous nature of Ulster tenant right. Prior to 1870 it had been a contract between the tenants and the landlord. After the act many landlords assumed that the law had now come between the tenant and the owner of his land, and they thus left all compensation to the act. This had the effect of placing further pressure upon the custom. For example, Hugh Gill Patterson, a tenant farmer from Druncloy, Emyvale, told the Bessborough Commission that some people in Monaghan called 'free-sale' tenant right. However, he considered the right of 'free-sale' at a high rent to be "no right at all."⁵⁴ Patterson was from county Down, having only moved into Monaghan in 1876. He claimed

⁵⁰ Names of the platform party come from an unspecified newspaper report (probably the Dundalk Democrat) dated 4 June, 1874 in ibid. Other information has been taken from Irish Ecclesiastical Register.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Livingston, Monaghan Story, p 332.

⁵³ McElroy, Route Land Crusade, p 27.

⁵⁴ Bessborough Commission, Vol XIX, evidence of H G Patterson, pps 409-410.

that the tenants had much better farms in Down than Monaghan. The reason for this was not that they were more industrious, nor was it that the land was superior in Down; rather, he suggested that the lack of security of tenure with a fair rent (ie not having the burden of paying greatly increased rents for tenants' improvements) dissuaded the Monaghan tenant farmers from improving their holdings.

Other speakers reiterated Patterson's statements. Canon Smollen, Parish Priest of Clones, stated that in that part of the county, the agent, Mr Wrench, had almost completely eradicated tenant right on the estates on which he was employed.⁵⁵ On the estate of John Madden of Rosslea Manor the rent had been raised three times in the last generation. Whilst there was no tenant right allowed on the Rossmore property at all. The agent there simply gave an ex gratia payment of £5 per acre.⁵⁶ Another witness noted that the activities on the Leslie estate at Glaslough were no better.⁵⁷

In the barony of Farney the conditions were not any better. Thomas McEvoy Gartlan, the President of the Farney Tenants' Defence Association stated that he farmed 300 acres which he held from the Marquis of Bath. There was a certain amount of tenant right upon that estate, but it had been limited on the Shirley estate.⁵⁸ Gartlan complained that the rentals had increased greatly during his lifetime without the landlords spending 'a single shilling' on the land. As proof he quoted W S Trench's Realities of Irish Life wherein it was claimed that total rental in Farney was £40,000. This he contrasted with the rental some 80 years earlier which was £8,000. In other words, the estates' rentals increased five-fold in the period from 1769-1843. It was hardly fair to offer Trench's work as proof when the people of Farney had constantly claimed that he was a liar. Trench's book had met with considerable opposition in the barony. Indeed, as late as May 1873 the marble Celtic Cross in Donaghmoyne Church of Ireland graveyard which had been erected over his grave was

55 Ibid, evidence of Canon Smollen, p 415.

56 Ibid, p 416.

57 Ibid, evidence of Charles Pringle, p 413.

58 Ibid, evidence of Thomas McEvoy Gartlan, pps 418-419.

smashed. Gartlan concluded his evidence by pleading for the introduction of the 'Three Fs'.

The evidence of the Bessborough Commission, although given some six years later, indicates that the position of tenant right in the county was very precarious. The actions of the agent on the Bath estate had precipitated a crisis in the south of the county, and the tenants had reacted with the Farney Defence Association. Elsewhere, in the Protestant districts of the county, around Clones, Glaslough and Monaghan town the estates were limiting the sale of tenant right. On the Dartrey estate, once more in a Protestant part of the county, there was an effort to limit sale by office rules. In other words, the Protestant and Catholic tenants of Monaghan had a common grievance against their landlords. There was always the possibility they would unite across the sectarian divide in support of the demand for tenant right and general land reform. As Father Bartley had pointed out at the inaugural meeting of the Farney Tenant Defence Association the Protestants were now inclined to stand shoulder to shoulder with their Catholic countrymen to demand action on the land issue. Time would tell if this would be a generalised phenomenon of any longlasting proportions.

Because Monaghan men were generally unhappy with the system of land tenure within the county did not mean that the sectarian divide was completely forgotten. On St Patrick's Day, the nationalists of the county had a meeting at Ballytrain in south Cremorne.⁵⁹ The Orangemen were equally active. The County Grand Lodge met in May and after some discussion it was decided that the Orange districts should make arrangements for the anniversary to be celebrated on Monday, 13 July according to local circumstances. As was usual, there was an attempt to have the county lodge organise a full county demonstration, but perhaps due to the fear of collision with the Catholics of the county it was decided not to follow this advice.⁶⁰ The county lodge

⁵⁹ This and subsequent information about parades and demonstrations is taken from, Returns of all Party Processions held since the Repeal of the Party Processions Act in 1872, HC 1880 (380) LX 395, and, Returns of all Party Processions held since the Repeal of the Party Processions Act of 1872, up to August, 1880, HC 1880 (389) LX 435.

⁶⁰ Monaghan County Minutes, 19 May, 1874, p 205.

also discussed complaints brought against LOL 155, District of Dartrey by the District Master, Thomas Wright. The significance of this was that LOL 155 had been acquired directly from the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland by Rev John Flanagan, but with the permission of the Monaghan County Lodge. Wright complained of irregularities within the lodge and the County Lodge decided to refer the matter back to the Dartrey District Lodge for consideration.⁶¹ Flanagan was a very prominent Orangeman in the county, holding the high office of Grand Chaplain of Ireland as well. His voice was invariably heard in the County Lodge up to the year 1872. In that year Flanagan got into dispute with Brother John Rowan of Ballybay. The cause of the dispute is unclear, but at the same time there was a dispute between Rowan and Rev Henry Burdett, District Chaplain of Ballybay and Deputy County Grand Chaplain.⁶² There was no further discussion of the dispute within the Grand Lodge, but it is possible that Flanagan was unhappy at the outcome. In any case, in 1872 he was not returned as Grand Chaplain, his place being taken by Rev Charles Crowe, of Newbliss Church of Ireland. Flanagan subsequently withdrew from the proceedings of the County Lodge. His lodge, LOL 155 was eventually struck off for non-payment of dues and non-attendance at District meetings. This virtually ended Flanagan's orange career. It is unclear whether this dispute was a result of Flanagan's political views, but they may well have been a contributory factor.

Following upon the decision of the County Lodge not to hold a single county demonstration, the Orangemen of Monaghan paraded at Ballybay, Clones, Monaghan town and Newbliss.⁶³ There was no trouble in Monaghan, but at Kilrea in south Derry county, and in Armagh there was trouble; in each place a Catholic was wounded.⁶⁴ Four weeks later, on 4 August, the Catholics held a very large nationalist meeting at

⁶¹ Thomas Wright of Feugh, Newbliss was Dartrey District Master. He had held the post since 1867.

⁶² The biographical information about individual Orangemen comes from County Grand Minutes. Similarly, the information on the Flanagan conflict is from the same source, 1872-1874.

⁶³ Return of Party Processions.

⁶⁴ TCD 1710/49, newspaper cutting from Dublin Daily Express.

Newbliss. As with the Ballytrain meeting in March, Madden was not invited although still very active in Home Rule League affairs.⁶⁵

The Newbliss meeting was followed on 10 August by another Nationalist gathering, this time at Ballybay. Five days later, on ~~Our~~ ~~My~~ Lady's Day, the Nationalists of Ulster held demonstrations all over Ireland. These rallies were mostly under the auspices of the Home Rule League. And the identification of the movement with the Catholics of the island was obvious. The Monaghan Home Rulers assembled in the county town to hear an address by Isaac Butt. One banner carried the inscription, 'Men of Monaghan Remember McManus.'⁶⁶ The chair was taken by Mr William McPhillips of Scotstown, and the fact that Isaac Butt and Home Rule were jointly associated with 15 August celebrations and William McPhillips, demonstrated that in Monaghan the non-sectarian nature of the Home Rule movement had disappeared. McPhillips had been involved in the litigation surrounding the 1868 Orange riot in Monaghan town. There was no trouble after the meeting, but in Lurgan, another area where sectarian tension always ran high, the meeting was addressed by a man called Donnelly who had recently been acquitted for the murder of a Protestant. Joseph Biggar also spoke, and after the meeting was over a number of Protestant houses was wrecked. One man was kicked to death and his wife and niece injured.⁶⁷

The year 1875 experienced little in the way of political excitement. In Monaghan the tenant right movement continued to operate at a muted level. Interest in land reform was still high, but there were no incidents of any note. On 17 March the Nationalists held demonstrations at Castleblayney and Monaghan town, whilst on 15 August they assembled at Scotshouse. The Orangemen, for their part, met at Rossmore Park, Ballybay and Emyvale on 12 July and Clones on 10 August.⁶⁸ Around 5,000 Orangemen were involved at the Rossmore Park demonstration and the chair was taken by William Mitchell, and among

⁶⁵ Madden's Diary, 4 August, 1874.

⁶⁶ TCD 1710/48, undated newspaper cutting from the Dublin Daily Express.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Return of Party Processions.

the speakers were Archdeacon Stack, and Reverends Naylor, Woods and Fullerton.⁶⁹

What altered the tranquility of Monaghan during this period was the advent of a mini-famine in 1877. The summer was particularly wet that year, and the same could be said of 1878. In 1879 it was somewhat better, but again, heavy storms occurred which destroyed crops. It has been estimated that the period 1877-1879 saw the destruction of £20,000,000 in agricultural produce.⁷⁰ As with the Great Famine some 30 years before, the Irish population had only the potato between it and starvation. The fear of the loss of this last support for tens of thousands of Irish people, acted upon the already smouldering discontent in Ireland. It would be the final factor which was to precipitate the major crisis in Ireland since the famine.⁷¹

Meanwhile, the Home Rulers were not making any great leeway at Westminster. The party itself was gradually splitting into pro and anti Butt factions. Or, to put it another way, into those who supported Butt and his gentlemanly acceptance of the solemn and decorous mode of behaviour followed by British parliamentarians for centuries, and those who were in favour of using obstruction as a manner of forcing concessions from the Westminster government.

Obstruction was the new policy of the new men in the Home Rule party. It was a departure from the traditional attitude of the Home Rule MPs at Westminster. As noted above, the policy was instituted by Joe Biggar and he was quickly joined by Charles Parnell. One contemporary has suggested that Parnell meekly took instructions from Biggar,⁷² but this seems most unlikely. Indeed, others have stated that the roles were reversed and that Parnell simply utilised Biggar's

69 TCD 1710/48, cutting from the Dublin Daily Express, 13 July 1875.

70 N D Palmer, The Irish Land League Crisis, (New Haven, 1940), p 64.

71 The incidence of famine in south Ulster is discussed below, In some ways the spectre of the Great Famine of 1846-1852 was more significant in the growth of the Land League than its later rival of 1877-1879.

72 Tim Healy, Letters and Leaders of my Day, (New York, 1929) Vol I, p 52.

hatred of Westminster to follow the policy.⁷³ In any case, initially only the Nation and the Weekly News supported Parnell and Biggar in their actions.⁷⁴ However, as Butt's tactics continued to prove ineffective, it was only a matter of time before the active policy was supported by many more Irishmen, both in and out of Westminster. During the session of 1876 Butt had followed a plan of debate, discussion and argument within Westminster in an attempt to procure reforms from Disraeli's government. The lack of success, (not one Irish measure advocated by the Home Rule party passed into law),⁷⁵ made the adoption of the Biggar and Parnell tactics virtually inevitable. The nationalist press started to question the efficacy of Butt's tactics. Not only was the parliament at Westminster ignoring Irish demands, but the number of MPs actually making those demands was falling as absenteeism amongst Nationalist MPs grew to a much higher proportion than it had ever assumed amongst Protestant landlords.

An important element in the disputes within the movement was the Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain. Set up in 1873 as an adjunct to the main movement in Ireland, it was quickly infiltrated by British Fenians. There was a certain amount of conflict between the two movements. In December, 1875 the HRCGB wrote to the HRL to the effect that it was ignoring resolutions passed by that body.⁷⁶ These resolutions were often an embarrassment to the leaders of the party as they advocated a more positive policy within Westminster. The HRCGB also requested a joint conference at which policy could be discussed. This was also rejected. The HRL also ruled that block votes could not be accepted at the Dublin meetings. This was to ensure that the number of HRCGB pro-Parnell/Biggar voters would be reduced. Its radicalism was underlined by the fact that it organised a republican rally in Dublin on 4 July, 1876 to honour the centenary

73 Sullivan, New Ireland, p 414.

74 Healy, Letters and Leaders of my Day, p 52.

75 Thornley, Isaac Butt and Home Rule, Ch X.

76 PRONI, Home Rule League Letterbook, D 213, contains a number of letters to HRCGB. See for example, Blunden, Daunt, Galbraith and Redmond, Secretaries HRL to Kirwan, Secretary, HRCGB, undated, pps 147-152.

of the foundation of the USA.⁷⁷

The session of 1877 was to see the full implementation of the policy of obstruction. To counter the challenge of Biggar and Parnell, the government altered the House rules so as to make the obstruction of business more difficult. However, the inefficiency of these measures was indicated three days later when Parnell and his supporters forced a 26 hour sitting on the House.⁷⁸

Butt's patience eventually wore thin and on 12 April he attacked Parnell's policy in the House of Commons during a debate, stating that,

. . . he must express his disapproval of the course taken by the honourable member for Meath. It was a course of obstruction - and one against which he must enter his protest. He was not responsible for the honourable member for Meath, and could not control him. He, however, had a duty to discharge to the great nation of Ireland, and he thought he should discharge it best when he said he disapproved entirely of the conduct of the honourable member for Meath.

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This attack upon Parnell's actions must have chastened him, albeit temporarily, for business was not held up any further that evening. It would be a few days before obstruction would reappear. However, reappear it did, and Parnell attempted the ploy of adjournment on 1 May. When Butt realised that he could no longer count upon party discipline to ensure Parnell and Biggar behaved, he sent copies of letters he had written to the two to the Freeman's Journal. This was to no avail and the position of the malcontents gradually acquired more support from the 'grass-roots' members. As a last resort, Butt called a meeting of the Home Rule party and requested that obstruction be discountenanced. After considerable acrimony and one or two near appeals to the Marquis of Queensberry, the meeting broke up with the decision to refer the matter to a full meeting of the Home Rule League.

The meeting was finally held in Dublin in January, 1878. In an attempt to keep the party together a compromise was worked out. No action would be taken against the obstructionists, whilst Butt would

77 Thornley, Isaac Butt and Home Rule, p 293.

78 McCaffrey, Irish Federalism in the 1870s, p 39.

79 Thornley, Isaac Butt and Home Rule, p 307.

be retained as leader. However, the writing was already on the wall for Butt and his party within the movement. The Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain had already replaced Butt with Parnell in the position of President. Now Butt discovered that he could not force the Home Rule Party to condemn the actions of Parnell and Biggar in the House of Commons. Already in December, 1877 two of Butt's longest associates, John O Blunden and Rev Jospeh Galbraith resigned from their positions as Honorary Secretaries of the Home Rule League.⁸⁰ Alfred Webb had already taken a similar action at the beginning of December 1877.⁸¹ And whilst it is not completely evident that these actions were taken because the Buttites recognised that their form of Home Rule agitation was losing ground, it would appear likely that the old guard was feeling isolated, alienated and no longer motivated as the founder of the movement saw both his health and his influence decline.

In addition to the difficulties of the Irish party at Westminster and the loss of confidence in their achievements among the people of Ireland, one further factor contributed to a growing militancy at home. This was the approach of famine in 1877. The summer of that year was particularly wet, and the destruction of much of Ireland's agricultural produce gave great cause for alarm. The potato crop, for example, always the great staple, fell from £12,5000,000 valuation in 1876 to £5,300,000 the following year.⁸² From then up to around the time of the 1880 election the people of Ireland were in fear of starvation. The mini-famine of these years was harshest in the west, but south Ulster also experienced a degree of hardship. West Fermanagh was severely affected around Holywell, Derrylin, Belcoo and Belleek.⁸³ In the Knockmore mountains many families were reported to be starving to death.⁸⁴ In south Tyrone around Augherthine and Elderwood, destitution was widespread,⁸⁵ whilst Augher, Clogher, Trillick, Maguires'

⁸⁰ The League attempted to persuade the two to withdraw their resignations. However, they were finally accepted; see D 213, Home Rule Letterbook, pps 280, 281, 283 and 284.

⁸¹ TCD Galbraith Papers, Misc XI, Diary entry, 1 December, 1877.

⁸² Palmer, Irish Land League Crisis, p 64.

⁸³ Paedar Mac Doinnleibhne, 'Fermanagh (1870-1900),' in Clogher Record, Vol IV, No 4 (1963), p 17.

⁸⁴ Northern Whig, 29 January, 1880, p 8.

⁸⁵ PRONI, Montgomery Papers, D 627/293B, James Watt to Hugh de F Montgomery, 13 March, 1880.

Bridge and Clabby were all forced to apply to the Mansion House for relief.⁸⁶ In Donegal the western portion of the county was particularly badly hit with the problem exacerbated by the inability of the seasonal labourers to retain their harvest jobs in the west of Scotland. In addition, the murder of Lord Leitrim outside Milford led to a degree of anarchy on his estates during lengthy legal conflict over his will.⁸⁷

In the border area between counties Cavan and Fermanagh the perennial problem of flooding in the Erne basin was worse in 1879 than ever due to the constant rainfall.⁸⁸ In mid-Ulster the fruit crops almost entirely failed.⁸⁹ In the Fivemiletown district private charity was being dispensed during the winter of 1879. Starvation was not complete as one of the administrators of the funds noted in a letter to Montgomery.

. . . at present I only propose giving and that only in extreme cases as time is not outrageously (unclear) the better off class can manage for the present but there are I am afraid too many suffering from the beastly frost who can afford to fire nothing.

90

Nevertheless, the traditional picture of Ulster's avoidance of hardship can refer only to the north-east. Famine was felt in Tyrone

86 Ibid, D 267/293c, Watt to Montgomery, 22 November, 1880.

87 For a eulogy of the event, see, Proinnsias O Gallchobhair, History of Landlordism in Donegal, (Ballyshannon, 1975) pps 30-34. Leitrim may have been mentally unstable in his later life. Michael Davitt suggested that it was "the designs against the honours of their daughters" which led the tenants to eventually shoot Leitrim. See Davitt, Fall of Feudalism, (London, 1904) P 142. Lord Leitrim was an uncle of John Madden's wife, Lady Caroline Clements. Her brother, Robert Bermingham Clements became the Fourth Earl of Leitrim and was a progressive landlord. Madden was an active participant in the famous Leitrim will case which eventually went to the House of Lords in 1879. See Madden documents at Hilton Park, also Madden's Diary.

88 R W Kirkpatrick, 'Origins and development of the land war in mid-Ulster, 1879-1885,' in FSL Lyons and RAJ Hawkins, eds, Ireland Under the Union. Varieties of tension: essays in honour of TW Moody, (Oxford, 1980), p 214.

89 Ibid.

90 D 627/285, G Elliott to Montgomery, 5 December, 1879.

Fermanagh, Donegal, Cavan, Monaghan and parts of Armagh. Donegal was perhaps the worst affected county in Ulster. But Cavan, Monaghan, south Fermanagh, south Tyrone and parts of Armagh were also grievously affected by the onslaught of famine.

The position in county Monaghan was hardly much better. In May, 1879 the tenantry of Farney were requested to meet at O'Neill's Hotel in the town of Carrickmacross to consider a petition to the landlords of the barony requesting an abatement in rent. The chair was taken by the President of the Farney Defence Association, Thomas McEvoy Gartlan. A resolution was proposed by one of Shirley's Protestant tenants, Henry Overend to the effect that due to the unfavourable seasons over the last three years, that an abatement of four shillings in the pound should be allowed by the landlords. In turn, the tenants would promise to pay the full rent the following year if there was a good season.⁹¹ A number of other resolutions was proposed and Very Rev Canon Hoey, PP of Carrickmacross spoke in support of the action. He also mentioned that he had received a letter from Andrew Kettle, Secretary of the Central Tenants' Defence Association asking him to attend a meeting in Dublin the following week to discuss the possibility of conducting a campaign aimed at a general reduction in rents. Kettle's plans came to nothing, but this indicates that Davitt was not the only Irish radical to consider a general agitation.

The meeting decided to transmit copies of the resolutions to each of the landlords in the barony. Before the gathering broke up Rev Patrick Rooney PP stated that he had never seen so much poverty amongst the farming classes. Indeed,

There was more poverty in the famine years of '47 and '48 for the simple reason that there were more people in the country, but he believed that the farmers had then, if any, more means than they have at present.

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Similar sentiments were being expressed across the island at Irishtown, county Mayo where the Land League of Mayo was being formed

⁹¹ D 3531/B/3, newspaper report headed 'Movement To Reduce Rent In Farney,' dated 19 April, 1879.

⁹² Ibid.

on the same lines.

The resolution of the tenants received an expected response from the lords of the soil. H H Shirley admitted that there had been 'much suffering and distress,' but that the state of Irish agriculture compared very favourably to that of England, and that, with a few exceptions, he had not raised the rents on his lands since 1833.⁹³ Shirley concluded by stating that he would certainly give aid to his tenants if the next harvest also proved deficient.

Shirley's father, Evelyn Philip Shirley responded in a similar vein. He pointed out that Farney had been less severely affected than most parts of Ireland and that the position was much better than England. He also blamed the famine on free trade.⁹⁴ The other major landlord in Farney, the Marquis of Bath, also refused to reduce rents. In a letter to his agent he pointed out that there was a rule on the estate that rents could only be raised at 20 year intervals. He then posed the question that if that rule was to be broken for the benefit of tenants during a recession, should periods of prosperity be met with large increases? Further, Bath claimed that the recession was only a temporary problem which would quickly disappear.⁹⁵ Every landlord in the barony would appear to have rejected the tenants' appeal.⁹⁶

The tenants in Monaghan were not the only ones to consider such action. As already noted, over in the west of the island the Land League was being formed. In June large meetings were held at Westport and Milltown, the former against the express wishes of Archbishop MacHale. The tenants were gradually preparing to fight back. And if the difficulties were not of the landlords' making, they were at least being blamed for not co-operating as fully as necessary. On the

⁹³ Ibid, a copy of letter, H H Shirley, 14 Lower Berkeley Street, Portman Square, London, to Thomas McEvoy Gartlan, 23 May, 1879.

⁹⁴ Ibid, copy of letter, E P Shirley, 108 Eaton Square, London, to unknown (probably Gartlan or Phelan), Ascension Day, 1879.

⁹⁵ Ibid, Marquis of Bath, Longleat, to his agent, John Vernon, 9 May, 1879.

⁹⁶ Ibid, carries copies of a number of replies from other minor landlords. This suggests that there was a unified reaction to the tenants' demand on the part of the landlords.

Hilton estate, for example, Madden recorded that some young pheasants which he had been rearing had been maliciously destroyed.⁹⁷

The cry for a reduction in the rentals on the county's estates was taken up by the clergy of the diocese in August, 1879. At a mass meeting of the Catholic clergy an appeal was made to the landlords to give an abatement. Still there was no response in Monaghan.⁹⁸ In county Tyrone the landlords decided to accept a reduced rent. On 5 September Lord Belmore who held considerable lands in the county of Tyrone, wrote to Hugh de F Montgomery advising him to give an abatement of rents. Belmore's argument rested on the fact that Captain M Archdall was giving 20% on rents under £5, 15% on those under £10 and 10% on the rest. In addition, Lord Ely and one of his neighbours had already done so. So by September 1879 the landlords of county Tyrone had agreed to reduce the rents.

Once landlords in one adjacent area of the country started to give abatements, it placed pressure upon their neighbours to follow a similar course. This was not made any easier by the fact that many landlords owned land in more than one county. And there could be little justification for giving an abatement in one county and withholding it in another. John Madden, for example, held 3,549 acres of land in Cloone, county Leitrim, 3,974 acres at Manor Waterhouse, county Fermanagh, and 4,241 acres in Monaghan. In addition, since the murder of his wife's brother he was in a position to inherit a proportion of the Leitrim family's considerable holdings in counties Leitrim and Donegal. In August, Madden had visited Maane, county Leitrim and had been told that it was in a very dangerous and disturbed state. He recorded that since the death of Lord Leitrim the area had gone to ruin, observing,

The savages who occupy his lands as tenants have destroyed some 16 to 18 acres of planting to graze their cattle all over his land by force - The lodge is occupied by a man named Kelly who formerly lived at Ross Hill under the Leitrim . . .

99

97 Madden's Diary, 21 July, 1879.

98 Livingston, Monaghan Story, p 333.

99 Madden's Diary, 20 August, 1879.

The visit had been undertaken as the result of an appeal for a reduction in rents by his Leitrim tenantry, and he replied that it was premature.¹⁰⁰ This was an opinion which was also held by his agent for that area, David Finlay.¹⁰¹

This refusal to reduce the rents of the tenants on the part of the landlords was not simply a result of avaricious, uncaring and greedy landowners squeezing the last penny out of the tenantry. Generally speaking, the landlords in county Monaghan were humane Irishmen, albeit ones who would insist on a just return. There was a certain credence to their judgement that they had not raised rents for a large number of years. Furthermore, they were as much the victims of the time as were the tenants. It would be wrong to look upon their actions as being purely motivated by vindictiveness. While Shirley might not be willing to immediately accede to the tenants' demands, his wife was feverishly engaged in writing to wealthy English acquaintances requesting aid to be sent to the people of Ireland.¹⁰² In any case, the Shirley family instructed their agent, John Thomas Holland, to make immediate abatement. And this was published on 25 September, 1879.¹⁰³

The Shirley family decided to reduce the rents on all holdings which had been raised above the 1834 valuation by 20% for the year 1879. Thereafter all rents would be discounted by 10%. Those tenants who had lost their crops due to flooding were excused all rental. The only exception to this scheme was the houses in the town of Carrickmacross. This was a reasonable response to the problems facing the tenants. There could be no doubt in the minds of the owners that their tenants were in difficulties. Madden had recorded on 6 September that he was unlikely to receive any rentals as the farmers were ruined.¹⁰⁴ Madden was finding the position on his Leitrim

100 Ibid, 6 September, 1879.

101 Ibid, 9 September, 1879.

102 Farney Bubble Book, undated copy of letter from Mrs Shirley. The book carries a collection of ephemera in chronological order. The item before is dated, May, 1879, and the following, September. Thus the letter must have been written during the summer of 1879.

103 Ibid, copy of poster entitled, 'Shirley Estate: Notice of Abatement of Rent.'

104 Madden's Diary, 6 September, 1879.

estates almost untenable. For example, up to 1877 the arrears on his holdings in that county never amounted to more than £262. However, in 1878 arrears amounted to £641 and the following year this increased to £1,452. By 1880 it would be £2,700.¹⁰⁵

To counter the problem he called his Leitrim and Monaghan agents, Finlay and John Brady, to Hilton Park for a 'long conference on the state of affairs.'¹⁰⁶ This meeting took place on 2 October. Brady advised a general abatement of rents, and on 11 October, Madden invited John Richardson over to discuss the proposal. He was opposed, but Madden was not discouraged. He wrote to Edward Richardson and to another Monaghan landlord, Mr Arthurs.¹⁰⁷ Madden must have also contacted other Monaghan landlords, perhaps everyone in the county, because he received letters about abatement of rents from Lord Dartrey agreeing that abatement should not be given, and from Sir John Leslie, Andre Murray-Ker and Messrs Remburton and Maynall.¹⁰⁸

The resolve of the Monaghan landlords to withstand the demands of the tenants gradually weakened. On 18 October Edward Richardson and Sir Thomas Barret-Lennard wrote to him about abatement.¹⁰⁹ On the same day Madden heard that Arthurs had 'foolishly given way' and agreed to reduce his rents. Madden then wrote to Lord Rossmore who replied on 24 October that he was not in favour of abatement.¹¹⁰ However, on 21 October, Barret-Lennard had written that he was offering an abatement,¹¹¹ and on 25 October Dacre Hamilton also wrote that he was giving an abatement.¹¹² French of Ballybay expressed the opinion that the agents were the most influential figures in the demands for abatements. Presumably he believed that an abatement in rents was to

¹⁰⁵ Madden's Ledger, a xerox copy has recently been deposited in PRONI.

¹⁰⁶ Madden's Diary, 2 October, 1879.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 11 October, 1879.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 17 October, 1879.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 18 October, 1879.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 24 October, 1879.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 21 October, 1879.

¹¹² Ibid, 25 October, 1879.

the benefit of the agent in that it made the collection of rents much easier.¹¹³ And Madden noted in his diary that his Clones agent, John Brady, had argued forcefully in favour of abatement, whilst Finlay in Leitrim had given the tenants a 20% reduction on the first half year's rent in 1879.¹¹⁴ On 29 October Finlay wrote to Madden that his tenantry on the Leitrim estates had declined to pay any rent.¹¹⁵ Madden was finding, like almost all members of his class, that it was impossible to stand in the face of the united demand of the tenantry. On 30 October he decided to give a 20% abatement on the second half year due on the gale day in November to all his tenants. This was more generous than most of the landlords who only gave 20% on small holdings and 15% or 10% on the bigger ones. The abatement would cost Madden £800 but he noted that it was the only way to get in any rents at all.¹¹⁶

The achievement of the abatement throughout the length of Monaghan may have been seen as a defeat for the landlords and a consequent victory for the tenants. However, the fact remains that the landlords had relaxed their hold rather easily. Whilst it was true that the Farney Defence Association had demanded some action in May 1879, the movement to abate rents in Monaghan only really became serious when the clergy demanded such action. This had taken place at a meeting in Monaghan town on 23 August, and within nine weeks the landlords of the county had given substantial reductions. The question also has to be asked as to whether this campaign in Monaghan, a prelude to the Land War, was really a confrontation between recalcitrant tenants on the one hand and stubborn landlords on the other. Furthermore, it is unlikely that the dynamic of the movement to reduce the rents in the county during the second half of the year was really a concerted confrontation with the landlords. The correspondence of many of the major landlords indicated that they were not adverse to aiding their tenants when they fell upon hard times.

113 Ibid.

114 Ibid., 30 October, 1879.

115 Ibid., 29 October, 1879.

116 Ibid., 30 October, 1879.

On 17 October he wrote to his agent with regard to a tenant,

If he writes to me to take pity on him, you may tell him that the first thing he has to do is to be clean and tidy, if he remains filthy I will at once proceed against him & have him ejected for non-payment of rent; poverty is not the same in my mind as dirt but on the contrary is the result of that vice - otherwise it seems to be the case for the compassion of the landlord.

117

In other words, Shirley was quite willing to give aid to those of his tenants who were in financial difficulties as a result of the conditions of the times, but if there was any suggestion of sloth then they were to be given no countenance. This stance was a result of the belief that non-payment of rent was due to the inclemency of the weather, and not to a concerted campaign against the landlords, a fact which was underlined the following month when Shirley's agent reported that there was 'no indisposition to pay, it is only the poverty of the time.'¹¹⁸ And in December Shirley returned to the theme that there was no determination on the part of the tenants against paying rents or the landlords' rights. In Farney, he claimed, the difficulties were a result of poor prices and a bad harvest, a very different factor from that which existed in the west, and was 'much encouraged by that rascal Parnell's conduct.'¹¹⁹

The importance of Shirley's attitude as to the difficulty in receiving rents in Farney was that it did not consider the county to be suffering from the same problems as the west and south of the island. The suggestion was that the tenants of Monaghan were simply impecunious and thus unable to meet their rightful obligations. In the southern parts of the country a similar inability to lift the rents was a direct result of the opposition of the broad mass of the tenantry to the whole system of landlordism. Not so in Farney, thought Shirley. It would be impossible to prove Shirley's assertion. However, the tenor of the Madden papers, that is his correspondence and his diary, suggests that he was of the opinion that the Monaghan tenants were simply poor. As early as September, 1879 he had recorded

117 PRONI, Shirley Papers, D3531/C/4/1, E P Shirley to his sub-agent, Gibbings, 17 October, 1879.

118 Ibid, Gibbings to Shirley, 16 November, 1879.

119 Ibid, Shirley to Gibbings, 6 December, 1879.

that it was more than doubtful that he would get in any rents as the farmers were ruined.¹²⁰ And his postscript on the year made no assertion as to Monaghan agitators dissuading tenants from paying their rents.

Losses in rent will exceed £1000. No summer - worst harvest since 1816. Ireland is in a very disturbed & dangerous state bordering on revolution & thousands are on the verge of starvation through losses in trade, the fall in the price of cattle & the failure of the crops - all this has been intensified by the conduct of trading agitators - notably one Parnell, an MP for Meath who has attained an infamous notoriety - a vain idiotic young man who has been going about telling the people 'not to pay any rents but to keep a firm grip of the land' - this has led to many serious outrages - at all counts the old year of 1879 is now gone with all its follies, its crimes & its sufferings - Wars abroad & tumults at home - its closing hours have been lit up with a lurid glare of excitement (Tay Bridge disaster) . . . The heartfelt wish, as this year passes away & becomes a matter of history, of all must be that we may never see its like again. 121

The year 1880 opened with 'that rascal Parnell' away in America attempting to raise funds to alleviate famine in Ireland. The Land League had been founded on a national level at the Imperial Hotel, Dublin, on 21 October, 1879.¹²² Out of the small beginnings the foundation had been laid for a countrywide organisation with its leader being Charles Stewart Parnell. He had been the undisputed leader of the Irish nationalist movement both within and outside parliament for the previous twelve months. In addition, he had been approached by John Devoy in 1878, the leader of the American Fenians to agree upon a New Departure in Ireland.¹²³ The Land War, as the years 1879-1882 are known, was well underway by the beginning of 1880. The simmering discontent of 1877 and 1878 had threatened to break out a number of times in 1879 even before the formation of either the Land League of Mayo or the Irish Land League a few months later. By the turn of the year Parnell was at the centre of a movement which

120 Madden's Diary, 6 September, 1879.

121 Ibid, 31 December, 1879.

122 Paul Bew, Land & The National Question in Ireland, 1858-82, (New Jersey, 1979), p 69.

123 On the New Departure see T.W. Moody, 'The new departure in Irish politics, 1878-9'. In Essays in British and Irish History in honour of James Eadie Todd, ed H.A. Cronne, T.W. Moody, & D.B. Quinn, (London, 1949), pp 303-33; Bew, Land and the National Question; D. Ryan, The Phoenix flame : a study of fenianism and John Devoy, (London, 1937) or T.W. Moody, Davitt and Irish Revolution 1846-82, (Oxford 1982).

encompassed some millions of Irishmen throughout the world, both legal and illegal organisations, radicals and conservatives. All were bound together by a commonality of religion and race.¹²⁴ Against this background Ireland entered the new decade and approached a new election. Opposed to the nationalist movement in the north of Ireland stood the Conservative party, the Landlords, the Orange Order and the very vast majority of the Protestant population.

It had long been the custom at Westminster that parliament should prepare itself for dissolution in the year prior to the termination of a government. Thus by the end of 1879 the political parties in the constituencies were on the look out for prospective candidates. It would have been to Lord Beaconsfield's advantage to have addressed the country at the time of his triumphant return from Berlin in 1878 but he had let the opportunity pass. However, the close of 1879 saw the Conservative government gain a number of by-election victories which offered the administration's supporters a degree of hope. Thus when parliament reassembled in January, 1880 there was the inevitability of a general election. In the constituencies this meant that the respective party groupings had to meet to consider who were to be their candidates.

In mid-January a meeting of the Monaghan Conservative and Constitutional Association was held and the sitting members, Sir John Leslie and Sewallis E Shirley declared their intention of standing for re-election.¹²⁵ For the Liberals the task was more difficult. No Liberal candidate had stood for the county since the disastrous campaign of William Gray. Nor had the Home Rulers proved any more successful. The defeat of Butt in 1871 and Madden in 1874 indicated that the time might not yet be right for a nationalist campaign in the county. The question was now whether or not the anti-Tory candidate should be a Liberal.

The year 1880 suggested itself to be a propitious time for the Whigs. Lord Beaconsfield's government had not introduced any important

¹²⁴ See, for example, T. P. O'Connor, The Parnell Movement, (London, 1886).

¹²⁵ Northern Standard, 17 February, 1880, cited in Walker, Parliamentary Election Results in Ulster, p 327.

Irish measures. The threat of famine in Ireland would aid the Home Rulers in the three southern provinces. In Ulster, dissatisfaction with the Tory government coupled with the domestic conditions was to the advantage of the Liberal party which could count upon the support of the Presbyterian tenant farmers. The land issue, as we have seen¹²⁶ was of particular importance with the Presbyterian tenant farmers of Monaghan. Thus, it was no surprise that one of the most closely favoured Liberal candidates should be John Givan, a Presbyterian solicitor from Aughnacloy.¹²⁷ He would particularly appeal to the tenant farmers of the county as he had been prominent in actions brought before the land courts in defence of the rights of the tenants.¹²⁸

Land was not the only consideration which militated against Presbyterian support for the Conservatives. Another factor was the recent refusal of the government to grant Presbyterian chaplaincies in the Royal Navy. This had particularly infuriated the Presbyterian clergy whose influence upon their congregations was considerable. One Presbyterian minister in county Monaghan noted that, " . . . there never had been so general a manifestation of desire of our people to take the Liberal side in this county as at present."¹²⁹

The attitude of the Presbyterians could prove to be crucial to the outcome of any election in county Monaghan. By 1880 the Roman Catholics had a slight majority over the combined Protestants upon

126 See above, p 337.

127 John Givan, solicitor, born at Castlecaulfield, county Tyrone. Married Eliza Hopper of Crewe, county Tyrone and secondly Arminta Read, daughter of James M Ross, of Liscarney, Monaghan. Admitted to the bar in 1870, he was a magistrate for county Tyrone and also Chairman of Aughnacloy Town Commissioners. He represented Monaghan from 1880 until 1883 when he resigned his seat upon his appointment as Crown Solicitor for county Meath.

128 PRONI, Power Papers, TD 4636/B/14, Isabella M S Tod to Sir William Tyrone Power, 16 January, 1880.

129 Ibid, Rev William Cooke to Power, 23 January, 1880. Cooke was educated at Queen's University and Assemblies College. Licensed by the Coleraine Presbytery in 1853 he became agent for Belfast Town Mission. He was ordained at Drumkeen, county Monaghan on 8 January, 1856. He resigned his charge immediately after the election on 25 May, 1880 and died in Kilkenny on 27 April, 1887.

the electoral register.¹³⁰ This would, however, not ensure a Liberal victory in itself. Non-voting played a part in electioneering then as today, and landlord influence had not completely died out. Furthermore, whilst the implementation of the secret ballot had eradicated undue influence as a major factor at election time, it also ensured that a minority of one group could vote against the favoured candidate of their peers with a degree of equanimity. Thus the position of the Presbyterians of the county was crucial to Liberal election prospects. Monaghan's Presbyterians at this time were generally believed to favour a fairly advanced stance upon the land issue, but their antipathy towards the Catholic population generally resulted in their supporting the Conservatives. This fact is testified to in a letter which Sir William Power received from a Presbyterian Liberal in western Monaghan; he stated,

Between ourselves, the Presbyterians are very slippery, the time Lord Cremorne was elected they promised to support him, it was open voting then, when the day came - out of 500 or 600 of them only 30 kept their word. 131

The Liberal party in Ireland was well aware of the Presbyterian disaffection from the Tory government and, notwithstanding the evidence of 1865, preparations were quickly made to secure attractive Liberal candidates who could capitalise upon the situation. Just such a man was John Givan. Givan was from Aughnacloy. Of meagre beginnings, he had entered a solicitor's office to work as an office-boy and had gradually worked his way up to a partnership, enjoying one of the largest practices in south Ulster. In addition, he was a friend of Thomas Dickson, the MP for Dungannon. At the beginning of January Dickson had accompanied Givan to Monaghan town where a meeting

130 John Givan estimated that the Catholic segment upon the electoral register to be, " . . . 100 above one half of the entire constituency & the Liberals on the Register have a substantial majority." See, TD 4636/B/4, Givan to Power, 8 January, 1880. However, as noted above, p 303, Donnelly had estimated in 1874 that the Catholics had a majority of 134. By 1880 this would have increased.

131 TD 4636/B/4, M N Wall to Power, 15 February, 1880. Wall was a prominent Presbyterian Liberal. At the time of the 1871 election Philip Callan, MP wrote to Donnelly to the effect that in 1865 the Cremorne victory had been a direct result of the Catholic voting strength with most Presbyterian Liberals deciding at the last moment to support the Conservative candidates.

of the Liberal electors was being held to organise a campaign upon the latter's behalf. While they were there they took the opportunity to make the inevitable visit upon Bishop Donnelly.¹³²

Dickson was there to further the nomination of Givan, who was, after all, not a Monaghan man, but he had a further purpose in mind. Since 1874 it had been known that Sir William Tyrone Power of Annamakerrig House, Newbliss, was interested in contesting the county in the Liberal interest. With another general election approaching Power had written to his old friend, Isabella Tod. Tod was a Presbyterian and a well known suffragist, and he mentioned that he would again be interested in a parliamentary career. She, in turn, had relayed this information to Thomas Dickson who had then taken it upon himself to attempt to forge an alliance between the two prospective candidates. Consequently, during the interview which he and Givan had had with Bishop Donnelly, Dickson had mentioned Power's position, and Donnelly had given the impression that he was most favourably disposed.¹³³ Dickson immediately wrote to Power informing him of developments, as did Givan. The meeting of electors held on Wednesday, 7 January, had endorsed Givan and expressed a strong opinion in favour of Power.

Clearly, it was essential for Power to act quickly, and he immediately wrote to Lord Dartrey as the principal Liberal in the county, to enquire whether he would receive his support in 1880 as it had been offered in 1874. Power concluded his appeal to Dartrey with the assertion that he would not stand if a member of the Dawson family was interested. He explained that his views were similar to those expressed in his previous address which had been satisfactory to Dartrey, with the addition that he now felt it necessary to make, " . . . some advance towards 'fixity of tenure,' in the general prevalence of absenteeism."¹³⁴ As the most prominent of the county families which sided with the Liberal party, the Dawsons were one of

¹³² Donnelly's Diary, 7 January, 1880. The bishop recorded that Givan was in favour of "extreme tenant right and land settlement - Denominational Education & Reform of Grand Jury Laws & Poor Law - settling local matters at home in Ireland."

¹³³ TD 4636/B/4, Dickson to Power, 8 January, 1880.

¹³⁴ Ibid, Power to Dartrey, 10 January, 1880.

the most important ingredients in any successful Liberal campaign. The other essential to victory was the Catholic Bishop of Clogher.¹³⁵ With regard to Dartrey not only had his great wealth and social position an important role to play, but he was also very influential with the Liberal Protestants.¹³⁶ Dartrey replied swiftly that none of his family would be interested in representing the county and that he deplored

. . . the ruinous results of fixity of tenure to the tenants themselves as well as to the landlords and to the country generally; it would be very difficult for me to announce myself as a supporter of any candidate who advocated such a principle -- Under the Land Act tenants possess every security which can be wanted for the enjoyment of any improvements they may effect on their farms. 137

This statement demonstrated just how large a gulf had grown up between the Liberal Presbyterians and such of the territorial magnates as were also of that party. The Presbyterian voter, generally a tenant farmer, was unanimous in his condemnation of the 1870 Land Act as being neither sufficient nor satisfactory. Even the Orange farmers, usually so safely part of the Tory camp, showed signs of dissatisfaction. Dartrey reasoned that fixity of tenure would turn the landlord into a mere rent charger, and lead to the sub-division of holdings which would eventually result in a situation not unlike that which pertained in the west of the island. It was, therefore, impossible for him to support Power's bid for Parliament.

If Power's hopes of recognition were rebuffed by Dartrey, the reply which he received from Donnelly was hardly satisfactory, either. He wrote to the Bishop on 12 January. Presumably he had waited long enough to receive a reply from Dartrey. Anyway, his letter to Donnelly was largely the same as the one he had written to Dartrey. As already noted, his principles had overnight increased to include peasant proprietorship. He also mentioned the communications which he had had

135 In his letter to Donnelly, dated 12 January, 1880, Power stated that he had made an, " . . . advance in the direction of 'fixity of tenure' - - and of an experiment in peasant proprietorship;" the peasant proprietorship had been dropped in his letter to Dartrey.

136 Although not a Presbyterian, Dartrey had considerable influence with them. There were virtually no Liberal Episcopalians.

137 PRONI, TD 4636/B/4, Dartrey to Power, 13 January, 1880.

with Givan and Dickson and also the desire which existed within the county for him to stand.¹³⁸

Donnelly replied that he had told Givan that a Power candidacy would probably, " . . . be acceptable to the Liberals of the Co." However, he stressed that he gave this view only as an observer, and he "cautiously avoided giving anything like a pledge of support, declaring that I would not attempt anything like dictating to clergy or laity."¹³⁹ In effect, Donnelly was playing safe in refusing to pledge himself to a Protestant Liberal. He had experienced the reaction of the hierarchy to his decision not to oppose Madden in 1871, and besides, there was plenty of time for a Catholic Liberal or a Home Ruler to enter the contest. However, at his meeting with Givan and Dickson Donnelly had stated that Power was the member of the local gentry most likely to gain the support of the Liberals of the county. This was the sort of sentiment which Power would have wished to hear, but the Bishop now wrote,

I have talking (sic), naturally with different persons as to our election prospects &c. I find . . . that there is some feeling against you, especially in the eastern side of the County -- in Farney and around Castleblaney -- arising from . . . our last County election which took place when you were High Sheriff and allowed yourself, as I fear, to be considerably compromised by your subalterns.

140

Donnelly was referring to the placement of polling officers in Catholic areas who were unacceptable to the Catholic voters. The appointment of such men was undertaken by Mitchell and it had been the subject of a possible petition after the result. Power was probably an innocent victim of circumstances, and it is unclear if there was any real corruption at the election.¹⁴¹ Nevertheless, if there was a suggestion in certain Catholic circles that Power had not acted properly towards the Catholic electors at the last

138 Ibid, Power to Donnelly, 12 January, 1880.

139 Ibid, Donnelly to Power, 14 January, 1880.

140 Ibid, Power was also warned that the Mitchell affair was a threat to his political ambitions by Rev Bryan Duffy, PP of Aughabog. Duffy was priest in the area around Annamakerrig. He was also an official of the Monaghan Liberal Association. See, TD 4636/B/4, Duffy to Power, 21 January, 1880.

141 See above, pp 361-2.

election, then it might be enough to cost Power votes. Donnelly for his part, was not going to order support for a candidate if there was any possibility that the people would find him unacceptable. As a result, Donnelly decided to be guarded in his response to Power.

Upon the receipt of Donnelly's letter, Power immediately replied. He pointed out that Mitchell had pledged that nothing untoward would occur under his Sub-Shrievalty. Further, with regard to the Castleblayney appointment, Power had consulted the late Richard White, RM, a prominent Liberal Protestant and a man who was well known for his honesty, and who was respected by both sides. White had ratified the appointment. At the time Mitchell had explained that all the qualified Catholics and Liberals were out canvassing for their candidate, and that there was consequently only a Protestant Tory available. This was a view which Power claimed White also held. Regarding the petition by Butt's associates, it had been impossible to act upon it as it was improperly presented. Also he, " . . . was further disturbed by the hints at coercion and covert threats of Mr Butt's messengers."¹⁴² Power had then written to Butt and assumed that the matter rested there.

It is clear that the lack of support for his candidacy by both Dartry and Donnelly was more than a minor setback. It would be possible to be elected the Liberal MP for Monaghan without the aid and support of Dartrey but it was an impossibility if the Church was similarly reticent. Thus Power concluded to the bishop that he would not be in the slightest disappointed if the Liberals of the county were to decide that they did not wish him to represent their interests. He was, he stated, unpopular with the Roman Catholics over the question of the electoral agent, and with the Orangemen for objecting to the hoisting of Orange flags upon the spire of the parish church, and,

I fear that neither side are sufficiently advanced to appreciate a man who acts on principle -- not on mere party or personal motives -- and I am disposed to believe that such a man is not desired in the present condition of Irish politics. At any rate I am not one to make any concession of principle to the hatreds

¹⁴² PRONI, Power to Donnelly, TD 4636/B/4, undated, possibly 16 January, 1880.

and prejudices of either party . . . I am more than anxious that the party which has hitherto had the least should be fully indemnified for the future and compensated, if possible, for the past . . . If they want a more thorough going partisan or more sectarian representative . . . They must look elsewhere.

143

Power concluded that he would not commit himself until after the representative meeting of the Liberal electors of the county.

If things looked bleak in Monaghan for Power, over Ulster the position of the Liberals was gaining strength. On 14 January Dickson wrote to Power predicting that at least half the Ulster Tories would lose their seats. With regard to Monaghan, Dickson had absolutely no doubts that both he and Givan would be returned with large majorities. Nor was he alone in his optimism. Isabella Tod wrote a long letter to Power on 16 inst, to similar effect. She was evidently a close confidant of the Powers as the later correspondence indicates. Not only was she of Monaghan Presbyterian stock, but as a Liberal and a prominent suffragette she had close connections with many of the Liberal leaders in England. She urged Power to stand, and she offered as proof of imminent success quotes from letters she had received from Dickson and McMordie. Dickson was full of hope due to the recent success in the Donegal by-election of December 1879, when Thomas Lea was elected to represent that county in the Liberal interest. This was the first time that either of the county's seats had been wrested from the Conservatives. Dickson stated that he and Givan had been very well received by Donnelly and that, "His (Donnelly's) views were very moderate, and he asked for nothing unreasonable. (This is Private) I do not believe that Givan will have 1,000 majority."¹⁴⁴ Dickson had then assured Tod that Power was well thought of by the Catholics and that there should be no problem in the Liberals winning both seats. Tod's other correspondent had been Charles C McMordie, the son of a Presbyterian clergyman from county Down and prominent in Liberal politics. McMordie stated that he had spoken to Joseph Meighan of Monaghan town, Secretary of the Monaghan Liberal Association, who had informed him that the Catholics now had a majority upon the electoral

143 TD 4636/B/4, Power to Donnelly, January, 1880.

144 Ibid, Tod to Power, 16 January, 1880.

register. Also, there was a strong feeling against the two sitting members, especially Leslie, " . . . and that the best man to fight would be a Liberal Protestant, especially a man who would get Presbyterian votes."¹⁴⁵

McMordie's reading of the situation was well worth considering because he was in tune with the popular response to issues. He had, however, personally damaged his position with the Catholics due to his opposition to the University Act of 1879. Nevertheless, he was most conversant with the views of the Catholic electorate. With regard to the issues, he counselled an explicit declaration in favour of radical alteration in the land laws. With famine a fact of life in the west and showing signs of threatening Ulster, and with the Land League already active in parts of the north, the land question was one upon which the electorate, especially the Catholics, would accept no equivocation. He reasoned,

The development of the principle of the Bright Clauses of the Land Act appears to be the plan best suited to effect a settlement. If such a one go in for Peasant Proprietorship on the lines of the Bright Clauses, and make terms quietly with the Catholic leaders, he is sure to win . . . The Tories will promise anything but they will shy at the word, 'Peasant Proprietorships.'¹⁴⁶

This would be of special significance to Givan, who, as a lawyer, had specialised in fighting upon tenants' behalf in the Land Courts.

McMordie also advocated that the Liberal candidates should propose complete abolition of the existing Grand Jury system. There was, on both sides of the religious divide in Ulster, a desire to see the present Grand Jury system modified at least. This was particularly so with the Catholics in Monaghan since the McKenna case of 1871. Even the Conservatives were in favour of reform of the system. Thus to attract the Catholics and the Presbyterians the Liberals could not simply advocate reform, they had to call for a complete abolition. In effect, this meant the substitution of County Boards for Grand Juries, and that these be freely elected by the cess-payers of the county.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. Tod including long quotes from McMordie's letter to her in her correspondence with Power.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

These views, as expressed by McMordie, were those put forward by the eventual Liberal candidates in the county, John Givan and William Findlater.¹⁴⁷ The Grand Jury suggestion was one with which Power agreed. He was in a more difficult position with regard to the land question. In his first approach to Lord Dartrey¹⁴⁸ he had only intimated that he was in favour of 'fixity of tenure' and that had been met with disapproval by Dartrey. The Dartreys, although conservative Liberals, had been the most prominent Liberal family in the county in the nineteenth century and both the earl and his son, Lord Cremorne, who was a former MP for the county, enjoyed considerable personal support amongst the Protestant Liberals. Their opposition would throw him back entirely upon Catholic support which, if Donnelly's letter was anything to go by, was not entirely forthcoming. Thus Power had to write back to Dartrey, which he did on 17 January, to explain his "some advance towards 'fixity of tenure'".¹⁴⁹

Dartrey had argued in his reply to Power that the sub-division of holdings which would naturally result from the forced purchase of the land would destroy the agricultural industry in Ulster as it had in Connaught. Power picked upon this point and argued that fixity of tenure was a sure method of combating sub-division. Further, he argued that some form of peasant proprietorship was imminent and that it would be better if it took the form of fixity of tenure as opposed to some other more radical alternative. After all, "existing tenant right (which is made almost 'fixity' by penal clauses for disturbance)" would be a fair compromise. There would, he suggested, be no problem of capital outlay for purchase and with the safeguards against non-payment of rent or excessive rent demands, it would be an equitable solution to the land question. After eulogising the Dartreys as landlords, claiming that if all properties were managed like their's then there would be no land question, Power ended his final appeal for support. It is unclear whether Dartrey did reply, but if he did it was not favourable to Power's candidacy. During the 1880 General

¹⁴⁷ See the election addresses of Givan and Findlater in People's Advocate, 20 March, 1880, p 4.

¹⁴⁸ See above,

¹⁴⁹ TD 4636/B/4, Power to Dartrey, 17 January, 1880.

Election in Monaghan, the most prominent Liberal family in the county remained neutral.¹⁵⁰

On the same day that Power wrote to Dartrey he also contacted Dickson. He pointed out that things did not look to be as favourable for him as had first been imagined. Consequently, he would now be waiting until the representative meeting of the county Liberals was held and he was requested to contest the seat before he would be announcing his candidacy. This would indicate whether or not he was to have the support of the Liberals of the county, and he would also be able to ascertain what platform was required to win the county. He would not be coming forward unconditionally.¹⁵¹

Power's correspondence both to and from the principal characters in Liberal politics was brisk in the first half of January, but after 17th of the month, when he wrote to Dartry and Dickson, Power was to wait almost a week before any further communication. He had contacted the major Liberal backers in the county and all he could do now was to await developments. At this stage it appeared as if the farmers of Farney would not be supporting him. This was crucial to his campaign because as John Madden had discovered in 1874, without the support of the Catholics of Farney, no anti-Conservative candidate could be elected. If the Farney electors were not going to support him, then they would have an opportunity of expressing their disapproval at the Liberal meeting. Once specific charges were levied against him then he would have a chance to defend his conduct in 1874. Thus it made sense to await the verdict of the Liberal electors. If they were not against Power's candidacy, then this would be made evident at the meeting.

Another problem which Power had to face was the possibility of a Home Rule campaign. Madden had indicated in 1874 how much support Home Rule could enjoy within the county. It was evident that the Presbyterians would never support Home Rule, so strong being their antipathy towards the Catholics, but if they had to choose between Givan and Power then they would choose the former. For the Protestant Liberals the Home Rule candidates had little attraction, but a Home

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, Power to Dickson, 17 January, 1880.

Ruler could attract enough Catholics to split their vote and permit a Conservative to slip in. A Home Ruler, then, would cost the Liberals one of the seats, and it certainly would not be Givan's.

It was essential for Power that the anti-Tory alliance remain intact. Throughout these months the land agitation had been gaining momentum. A branch of the Land League was formed in Belcoo in county Fermanagh in 1879, and others quickly followed in that area.¹⁵² And whilst the Land League was a late arrival on the Monaghan scene, it was obvious that the general election of 1880 would be fought on the land issue. And it was upon this issue that it was essential for Power to come to some decision. He was in favour of fixity of tenure with certain safeguards for both sides, and for the tenant farmers to have the opportunity to buy their holdings if they so desired. This, moderate as it was, placed him out on a limb from the rest of Protestant society. He was a member of a landed aristocracy and to advocate forcible purchase and peasant proprietorship was to suggest the destruction of the absolute right of property - the principle upon which the landed class was founded.

Another problem which Power faced was finance and the fear that he might become involved in an expensive and unproductive campaign. In particular, he did not wish to fall into the trap of financing two campaigns and receiving no appreciable return at the end of the day. To this end he wrote to his friend, Richard N Dane.¹⁵³ Dane was a prominent Conservative agent in south Ulster. Although one of the opposition, Dane gave Power extensive advice upon electoral matters. On 16 January he wrote that he was of the opinion that Monaghan could be contested for a sum of £2,000.¹⁵⁴ He believed that Liberal chances were very good. There was, he counselled, a feeling that no Tory could do anything for Ireland, "more especially the Land Laws." This was

¹⁵² Rev P MacDoinnleibhe, 'Fermanagh (1870-1900),' in Clogher Record, Vol IV, No 4, (1963), p 17.

¹⁵³ Richard N Dane was a solicitor in Enniskillen. The family was active in Conservative politics in the area. For example, they controlled the second seat in the county of Fermanagh. See P M Bottomley, 'The North Fermanagh Election of 1885 and 1886,' in Clogher Record, Vol VIII, No 2, (1974), pps 167-181.

¹⁵⁴ PRONI, Dane to Power, TD 4636/B/4, 16 January, 1880.

similar to the view expressed by Tod, although coming from a Tory it must hold greater significance. Because the election would be contested upon the land issue, necessarily in opposition to the aristocracy, the Tories were unlikely to commend themselves to the tenant farmers. As proof of this Dane pointed to the recent result in Donegal. In 1876 his man had won by 79 votes, whilst at the last election, held in December, 1879, he was defeated by 683 votes.¹⁵⁵ This Donegal result was looked upon as a gauge of popular opinion in Ulster, and this it proved to be. The importance of the land question to the Protestant as well as the Catholic tenant farmers is indicated by the province's results. With the exception of Dickson who represented the market town of Dungannon, the other seven Liberal MPs were from county constituencies.¹⁵⁶

Where Ulster varied from the rest of the country was in that it had a large Protestant population. This meant that whereas Home Rule might be sweeping all before it in the south of the island, it could not do the same in the north. By 1880 there was only one party in the southern half of Ireland and that was the Home Rule party. In Ulster where there was a very large number of Protestants, the situation was different. In those areas where the Protestants were preponderant, and where there was a significant number of both Presbyterians and Churchmen, then the old two party system often lingered on. In those parts of Ulster where the Catholics were in the majority then they functioned politically in a similar manner to their southern co-religionists. Thus Cavan returned two Home Rulers in 1874. In areas where the two populations were evenly divided, then Protestant Liberals were rare as the Liberal party had been the party of the Catholic Church, and would thus change to Home Rule in 1880 or 1885. In Monaghan, as we have already seen, Home Rule was retarded somewhat by the fact that Madden had been prominent in its early stage and due to his inability to attract both the Protestants and the Catholics,

¹⁵⁵ McCalmont's Poll Book, p 81.

¹⁵⁶ These were Lea and Kinnear of Donegal, Richardson of Armagh, Law and McClure of Derry county, and Givan and Findlater of Monaghan. In addition, Macartney of Tyrone had been returned as a Liberal-Conservative in 1874. In effect, he defeated the Tories. He ran as an Orange tenant farmer with Liberal support, a position not unlike Johnston's in 1868; and, like Johnston, he quickly went over to the Tories once elected.

there was a slight delay before Home Rule reached its full potential. It is clear that in Monaghan those voters who were attracted to Givan and Findlater readily supported Healy in 1883, and both him and Sir Joseph McKenna in 1885.¹⁵⁷

Richard Dane did more than offer Power advice upon the finance of an election. In subsequent letters he counselled him to secure the support of the Bishop of Clogher, and thus the Catholic vote, but on no account to permit priests to appear upon his platform as this would antagonise the Presbyterians. The priests were only acceptable adornments upon platforms of those who desired no Protestant votes. There was a clear line which could not be crossed during election time. It was not only acceptable but desirable to have clergy of each denomination at your meetings, but a preponderance of one side upon the platform, would tend to alienate potential voters from the other side. Similarly, whilst McMordie was well known among the Catholic electors of the county and quite an expert upon electoral matters, his stance in favour of the University Bill meant that he was unacceptable to the Catholic authorities and therefore also to electors of that church. Dane pointed out, " . . . he has ruined himself with the Roman Catholics. In fact the Priests told Lea in Donegal if he, McMordie, appeared there for him, they would to a man oppose."¹⁵⁸ In a subsequent letter he discussed the other prospective candidate, Givan, and also Dickson. Against Dickson, Dane had absolutely nothing derogatory to say, and he was mostly eulogistic towards Givan. The only thing he did not like about him was that he had a very close connection with William Anketell of Anketell Grove.¹⁵⁹ Givan was his solicitor and his land agent; also, he held large mortgages upon his estates.¹⁶⁰ Anketell

¹⁵⁷ For a discussion of the 1883 election in Monaghan, see below, Ch VII, and John Magee, 'The Monaghan Election of 1883 and the Invasion of Ulster,' in Clogher Record, Vol VIII, No 2, (1974), pps 147-166.

¹⁵⁸ None of these letters from Dane are dated, but they are all written at an early stage in the proceedings; perhaps mid-January to early February. PRONI, TD 4636/B/14.

¹⁵⁹ William Anketell was a Liberal landowner. He owned 7,502 acres at Anketell Grove, north of Emyvale. He had initially been a Conservative.

¹⁶⁰ PRONI, TD 4636/B/14, undated letter, RN Dane to Power.

was not popular with the other landlords of the county and vicinity and that Givan should have such a close connection with him was not the greatest advertisement.

On 22 January, Givan wrote to Power stating that he would not be officially declaring himself a candidate until after the representative county meeting. This was not to occur until 10 February. Power replied that he, too, would not be announcing his candidature until after the Liberal county meeting. Power also mentioned his fear that a Home Rule candidate would be forthcoming.¹⁶¹ "Our chief danger," he wrote, "will be in the Home Rule element . . . If the Home Rulers put forward a candidate, - as they almost certainly will do - it will destroy the chances of one if not of both the Liberal candidates . . ."¹⁶² Indeed, Power reasoned that a Home Ruler would be of such benefit to the Conservatives that he would not be surprised if one was put forward by them so as to split the anti-Tory vote. In this he may have been suggesting the return of John Madden to the hustings. He was still viewed as a Home Ruler and could take Liberal votes if he stood. Madden was, of course, no longer associated with the Home Rule movement and as his Diaries indicate, he had returned to his original political allegiance.¹⁶³ Perhaps Power recognised this point and feared a trick by the Tories, using Madden as a diversionary tactic.

The meeting of the County Monaghan Liberal Association was scheduled for 26 January in the Christian Brothers' School. The chair of the meeting was taken by one of the prominent Presbyterian Liberals, M N Wall. A resolution was passed that the county meeting should be convened in Castleblayney on 10 February. Before any further resolutions could be passed, Rev Lawrence O'Neill spoke against any resolutions of support. It was then agreed that the candidates should be requested to state their principles before the representative

¹⁶¹ TD 4636/B/4, Givan to Power, 22 January, 1880 and Power's reply, ibid, 24 January, 1880.

¹⁶² Ibid, Power to Givan.

¹⁶³ Madden's Diaries for the period of the 1880 election are informative both on his activities and on his opinions upon political matters. He had a vote in Leitrim, Fermanagh and Monaghan and in all three counties he polled in favour of the Conservative candidates.

county meeting. This may have been a ploy to bring pressure against Power. The task for Givan was not very difficult. He was well known and well liked in the constituency both by the Presbyterians and the Catholics. Power, on the other hand, had to face the wrath of the Castleblayney delegates over the 1874 election appointment. If a resolution in his favour was sent to the county meeting then he would be in a strong position. However, if he had to attend the meeting, in Castleblayney Chapel, and give a speech asking for the nomination then he would be open to questioning.

On the day after the Monaghan Liberal meeting took place, Donnelly wrote to Power. He informed him when the Castleblayney meeting would occur, and then proceeded to a discussion of the platform which the meeting felt would be acceptable to the Catholic voters. This meeting could not dictate an electoral platform, but it was an opportunity for the Catholics to decide what they believed to be the key issues in the election. Donnelly did not believe that the County Liberals would insist upon the adoption of Home Rule.

The Land Question, just now, is the main issue to be considered. Then the Education question, the reform of the Grand Jury System & the poor law system. You must pledge yourself to vote against the Tory Government, and probably to vote along with the Irish Party at least on everything short of Home Rule. 164

It was now up to Power how he would proceed. He could now address the county so that the Castleblayney meeting could consider his stand on the major issues; he could announce his candidature before the meeting but not address the county until after it; or he could do nothing until the meeting which he might attend but without any public statement. The important thing was to ensure that the County meeting endorsed his candidature. If it did not, then he would not be able to successfully contest the county. Donnelly strongly stated in his letter the belief that Power would receive the endorsement of the Castleblayney meeting, and also that he would be victorious at the polls. One word of warning which he proffered was not to openly state in his election address that he was in favour of sectarian education; this might antagonise the Presbyterians who were strongly against it. Instead he suggested that Power not mention the issue

at all, and then at the meeting give assurances of his orthodoxy.

This was good news for Power, and he quickly replied that he would have no difficulty in fulfilling the conditions which Donnelly stated to be prerequisites for Catholic support of his candidacy. However, he still feared that there might be a Home Rule candidate. Thus he suggested,

I should also in any case consider that having come forward, proprio motu, at the last General Election, & having shown in my short canvass on what feet of clay our Tory colossus stood - I ought to be fairly entitled to expect that if the Liberals of the co. want me now, they should send me a requisition such as would justify me in incurring the expense and trouble of a hardly 165 contested election . . .

This was a clever attempt on Power's part to out-manoeuvre Donnelly and the Catholic Liberals of the county. However, it was not to be successful. A requisition from the Liberals would, in effect, have been an unconditional acceptance of Power's candidature by the Liberals, and this was something to which they would not consent. However, he was not to know this until the end of the first week in February. He was staying in Teignmouth but taking the opportunity to meet Dickson and other prominent Liberals in London to discuss tactics.

Following upon his letter to Donnelly about the possibility of a requisition from the Liberals, Power wrote to Givan from Teignmouth in an attempt to strengthen his plea that he be accepted on his merits. It was quite clear that Power was unhappy at the prospect of facing the Liberals of Castleblayney on their home ground. It is possible that Donnelly was behind the suggestion that no resolutions be sent to the Representative County Liberal Meeting in Castleblayney. He was subsequently to take the trouble of writing to Power to assure him that he was absent at both Liberal meetings.¹⁶⁶

On the same day as Power was writing to him from England, Givan sent a confidential letter to Power. In it he informed Power that he would not be issuing his address until after the Castleblayney

165 TD 4636/B/4, undated draft Power to Donnelly. The tone of the letter makes it clear that it was a reply to Donnelly's letter of 28 January, 1880.

166 Ibid, Donnelly to Power, 4 February, 1880. Contrary to newspaper reports, he was not at either of the Liberal meetings.

meeting. What Givan proposed to do was to write to the chairman of the meeting and explain his attitude to the major political questions and if the assembled Liberals were to find him acceptable, then they might consider endorsing him.¹⁶⁷ Givan suggested that Power do likewise. He dismissed the small section of Catholics and Orangemen who were opposed to Power and reminded him that "Sensible men of all parties are favourable to you including the Bishop." This letter was followed up with a second one, sent two days later.¹⁶⁸ Once again, Givan counselled Power to indicate to the Chairman of the Castleblayney meeting that he would be contesting the constituency. He also warned that Charles Russell¹⁶⁹ had decided not to contest Dundalk again against Phil Callan, but he was now interested in the Liberal nomination. Givan stated that he could, "easily see complications wh his candidature will create & which will be avoided if you come forward." Givan's concern was for more than just Power. If Russell was to stand, then as a prominent Catholic lawyer, he could be assured of the majority of the Catholic votes in the county. One of Givan's great strengths was his legal background, but this would pale in significance when compared to the achievements of Russell. Thus a Russell candidacy would harm Givan to a greater extent, perhaps, than it would Power.¹⁷⁰ Thus there was more to Givan's reminder to Power that he should address the Liberal meeting than an offer of advice to a colleague.

Power had travelled over to England in the first week of February, and it seems clear that this was so as to avoid attending

167 Ibid, Givan to Power, 3 February, 1880.

168 Ibid, Givan to Power, 5 February, 1880.

169 Charles Russell, 1832-1900. Born in Newry, Russell was a prominent member of the Liberal party. He had successfully contested Dundalk in 1868 and 1874. He, in fact, contested that seat again in 1880 and defeated Phil Callan at the third attempt. He was regarded as the foremost legal brain in the country. His most famous case was the successful defence of Parnell during the Special Commission in 1889. As Lord Russell of Killowen he was Lord Chief Justice, 1895-1900.

170 Power evidently sent Givan's letter to Tod who returned it on 7 February. She discountenanced a campaign by Russell in Monaghan on the grounds that "it would be foolish for him to give up Dundalk where Mr Callan is so much discredited that a moderate man (as I understand Mr Russell to be) would have a much better chance than last time." TD 4636/B/4, Tod to Power, 7 February, 1880.

the Castleblayney meeting. However, all this correspondence had made it clear that it was essential to his chances that he give a clear indication to the assembled Liberal delegates of his intention to contest the county. To this end he had received a letter from Donnelly which, after making it clear that no requisition would be forthcoming, stated that he should follow one of three different courses; attend the meeting, state his principles and answer questions, send an authorised deputy to state his principles and answer questions, "ready also to explain your conduct in relation to the Co election which I spoke of,"¹⁷¹ or, at least to write to the chairman of the meeting explaining principles and stating his readiness to act with the 'Irish Liberal Party' upon every issue short of Home Rule. Donnelly also assured him that whilst most of the county Liberals were Home Rulers, there was no chance of there being a Home Rule plank in the Liberal platform, nor a Home Rule candidate.

After receiving such a deluge of correspondence in the preceding week, all advocating that he write to the Liberal meeting through its chairman and declare himself a candidate for the representation of the county, Power sent just such a notification to Peter Bermingham DD, Parish Priest of Castleblayney. He commenced by reminding the Liberals that he had addressed the county in 1874 when it appeared that there would be no Liberal candidate, and that he had had to withdraw when he was unable to find a replacement for the post of High Sheriff. His political principles, were, he stated, the same as they had been six years previously, with the exception that he had advanced in the direction of security of tenure and "Peasant proprietorship as may be advocated by Mr Gladstone, Mr Bright and other earnest and advanced Liberals."¹⁷² He further advocated reform of the Grand Jury system, the administration of the Poor Laws, extension of the franchise, "in extending and securing tenant right and such improvements in the Land Laws as would ease the transfer of tenure, obstacles to sale by settlement, and facilitate in every legal way the extension of peasant proprietorship."¹⁷³ He was not a Home

171 Ibid, Donnelly to Power, 4 February, 1880.

172 Ibid, Power to Bermingham, 6 February, 1880.

173 Ibid.

Ruler, he stated, in the sense of a separate legislature or of disruption of the Empire at a time when America, Germany and Italy had done so much to consolidate their provinces, " . . . but I would decentralise much Parliamentary work and would greatly extend local self government."¹⁷⁴

These, then, were the general principles which Power expressed to the meeting. It was thence forward up to the delegates to decide whether or not Power would be acceptable. There does not appear to have been any question of the acceptability of Givan's programme, although at the meeting one man objected to Givan on the grounds that he was a Presbyterian bigot, but he was quickly shouted down.¹⁷⁵ Power's major opponent was Canon Hoey, PP of Magheracloone; this was with regard to the 1874 election. Donnelly wrote to Power after the meeting that Hoey's name was a power in Farney,¹⁷⁶ and it was essential for Power to come to grips with this problem. But generally the reception of both Power and Givan was good. A number of people who had been present at the meeting wrote to inform him that both had been unanimously adopted by the delegates. However, they had requested that he should give his attention to two points. Firstly, he was asked to change the phrase, 'security of tenure' to 'Fixity of tenure, fair rents and free sale;' secondly, that he should go to Farney and remove "some unfavourable impressions against you in that quarter since the last General Election."¹⁷⁷ Once again, the feeling was that the Farney problem must be given precedence over all else.

Power wrote to Donnelly that he would be returning to Ireland shortly to see Hoey and to ensure that the Farney affair did not get out of hand. With regard to the land question, he had no hesitation in altering his address accordingly. Power confided to Donnelly that he had felt it expedient to fall short of the mark in his address, as

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ This point is mentioned in a letter to Givan from Power, ibid, 10 February, 1880.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, Donnelly to Power, 14 February, 1880.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, Rev P Bermingham, DD, Chairman of Castleblayney meeting, to Power, 15 February, 1880.

opposed to going further than was expected.¹⁷⁸ The next step was to meet Givan for the first time and discuss the campaign with him. To this end, Givan wrote to Power on the day of the Castleblayney meeting informing him that he was certain that dissolution of parliament would not occur until May or even July, and thus there was no great hurry.¹⁷⁹ The Bishop also wrote shortly after the meeting to warn Power of the Hoey opposition and to suggest that he immediately get negotiations underway to resolve the difficulties which existed. One positive aspect of the whole affair was that the Catholic who was supposedly the aggrieved party, that is, the man who should have been appointed Polling Officer at Castleblayney, a Mr Laverty, had seconded Power's nomination. This seemed to take some of the heat out of the situation.

Donnelly also reminded Power that because the university question was almost settled, nothing need be said about it for fear of antagonising the non-Catholic Liberals. Similarly, there was no unanimity amongst Protestant and Catholic Liberals upon the Poor Law system reform, or the extension of the franchise. Donnelly was quite certain that Presbyterian support was essential for both Liberals to succeed, thus it was important not to antagonise them. His views were, after all, well known to the Catholics. So important did Donnelly view 'Protestant and Presbyterian support,' that he wrote to Power again on the following day to remind him that it was extremely important that the contentious issues be avoided.¹⁸⁰

Power replied that he had already arranged to meet Givan upon his return to Dublin, and that the reason that he had been delayed in London was that he had been having a number of discussions with leading members of the Liberal and the Irish party. Also, he had written to Hoey explaining his position vis-a-vis the 1874 appointment, and that he would be going to Farney directly to allay any fears which might exist over his past conduct. He was, he said, quite certain that he could satisfy the farmers' demands for land reform and an overhaul

178 Ibid, Power to Donnelly, 19 February, 1880.

179 Ibid, Givan to Power, 10 February, 1880.

180 Ibid, Donnelly to Power, 15 February, 1880.

of the Grand Jury system. On the point of Protestant support he concluded with a postscript,

I know that your Lordship will not take offence if I venture to say that I am advised by a very astute politician¹⁸¹ that it will be essential, - if we are to keep Protestant votes, - that your clergy should not appear on the platforms, or be too conspicuously active in the Protestant parishes. A recommendation to this effect could come to them from no-one but your Lordship. 182

This was an essential point as far as Power was concerned, and one which Donnelly might not have disagreed with.

Throughout the preliminary negotiations which led up to the nomination of both Power and Givan by the Catholic Liberals of county Monaghan, the two had asserted that they would not be willing to come forward for the county if they were to be nominees of only one party. Thus, with the Liberal nomination all but secured, and their names already being bandied about the county by both Liberals and Tories, it is surprising that there is no evidence of any negotiation with any of the Presbyterian groupings in the county to receive the support of that body. Part of the reason for this is that the Presbyterians did not have as advanced an electoral organisation as their Catholic neighbours. However, the Presbyterians were often members of other organisations which were traditionally aligned with the Liberal party, and in this way Presbyterian endorsement could be secured in an indirect manner. An obvious example of this would be the support of a candidate by the tenant farmer association in a Presbyterian area such as Muckno or around Glaslough. The meeting of the Monaghan County Liberal Association was chaired by M Napoleon Wall, a Presbyterian Liberal from the Clones area. So there was probably a Presbyterian presence at the meeting other than the chairman. However, the Monaghan Liberal Association was primarily a Catholic association. It was founded by the Bishop and organised on parish lines with the local priest or one of his curates taking charge of the organisation. The Presbyterian electors appear to have been organised around a Monaghan Defence Association. This was another Catholic organisation at its inception, but Presbyterians were able to join it as they were the Farney association. And as the rest

181 He was referring to Richard N Dane, the Enniskillen solicitor and Conservative agent in south Ulster. See above

182 PRONI, Power to Donnelly, TD 4636/B/4, 19 February, 1880.

of Monaghan contained strong Protestant pockets it is likely that the Presbyterians and other Protestants who were active in the land question were attached to the Monaghan Defence Association. It had been formed on 22 August, 1875, at the behest of the Catholic clergy.¹⁸³

Apart from land related associations the Presbyterians were also active in the branches of the Irish Temperance League. It was a particularly important organisation at this time. It operated as a political pressure group to promote measures which would further the temperance movement. The League's attitude to the election was indicated by its manifesto which was published in the Belfast Newsletter. They hoped that they would be able to persuade the government to pass legislation which would either prohibit the sale of intoxicants throughout the whole country, or else to permit local option which could declare localities able to ban alcohol in their own areas. The manifesto did not equivocate,

Our intemperance is our national sin and shame, the foulest blot on our escutcheon, the grossest scandal to our religion, the bitterest curse of our homes, the deadliest scourge of our people. It is more desolating than war, or famine, or pestilence - an enemy more to be dreaded than the mightiest foreign foe . . . We submit that the primary question with every elector ought to be, not "How shall I best help my party to power?" but "How shall I best promote the Divine honour and the good of my fellow men?" . . . Vote, then, for the men who will try to remove it (alcohol) - for none who would force it on the people. ¹⁸⁴

It concluded with the request that votes be given only to those candidates who would guarantee to at least support the measure of local option which would be brought before parliament.

In an attempt to 'desecetarianise' their call to stand for the county, Givan's supporters organised a Presbyterian requisition for both himself and Power.¹⁸⁵ This would ensure that the Tories could not claim that they were the nominees only of the Catholic party. Power's requisition contained forty-five names, and requested an

¹⁸³ Livingston, Monaghan Story, p 334.

¹⁸⁴ Belfast Newsletter, 13 March, 1880.

¹⁸⁵ TD 4636/B/4, Givan to Power, 19 February, 1880. A report in the Northern Whig of 21 inst, states that the requisition had been signed by a number of influential Presbyterian and Episcopalian electors who were in favour of the tenant farmers.

independent candidate who would support

. . . a reform of the land laws and secure for the tenant proper fixity of tenure and peasant proprietorship when practicable with absolute security to the Tenants for their improvements and right of free sale and also a reform of the Grand Jury laws giving representation to the ratepayers. We request that you will now come forward and contest this County upon Liberal (sic) Independent principles and as the advocate of the above measures and in case you do so we bind ourselves to support you and to use our best exertions to secure your return.

Dated 18 February 1880.

186

Amongst the signatories of the requisition were W Moffat Clow, of Emyvale, and Peter and James Clow of Emy Mills. The Clows were prominent grain millers and dealers. The day following his signing of the above, W Moffat Clow wrote to Power asking for the answer to certain questions. He pointed out that he knew Givan and would be supporting him. The Clows were prominent Liberal Presbyterians in the north Monaghan area, and their position as traders placed them in a position where they met numerous electors and could influence them either for or against Power.

Clow was interested in two points, firstly Power's stance on the temperance issue, and secondly his attitude towards denominational education. With regard to the first, Clow wanted to know if Power would support Sir Wilfred Lansing's Local Option resolution, (the measure to close public houses in England) and for its continuation and extension to Ireland, and lastly if he would support A M Sullivan's bill which would force early closing on Saturdays. Secondly, he was interested in Power's position upon denominational education, and if he was going to go so far with the Roman Catholics.¹⁸⁷

These questions indicate how difficult a task lay ahead of the Liberal candidates. It was essential to secure some Presbyterian votes to ensure victory at the polls, but upon the education question the Presbyterians and the Catholics held totally antithetic views.

186 Ibid, requisition from the Liberal Presbyterian electors of county Monaghan to Sir William Power. The original mentioned 'Liberal principles' but this was changed immediately to 'Independent principles.'

187 Ibid, Clow to Power, 19 February, 1880.

Where possible, Power could ignore the education issue, but when asked directly where he stood upon it, he had to make some statement. His answer to Clow might be all important because Givan, with the support of the Catholic electors given at Castleblayney and with his Presbyterian background was almost certain of election. Power had to ensure that he did not alienate the required section of the Presbyterian vote which would ensure victory. Clow pointed out,

You will lose nothing by supporting. For example Henry Pringle of Clones, who would give his second vote to Sir J Leslie (however much he would condemn his general conduct in the House) rather than support a Liberal who would go against the Temperance party. 188

Givan had already pledged to support the Lansing and Sullivan measures as had Sir John Leslie. Mr Shirley had agreed to support all but the local option measure, " . . . and although he has never voted for it, he has never voted against it."

Power replied that he would be willing to support each of the temperance measures mentioned by Clow. He added that he would support all measures for the relief of the tenant farmers with a view to security and fixity of tenure, fair rent and a free sale. He was also in favour of Grand Jury reform and an elected financial County Board. With regard to denominational education, Power pointed out that he had addressed the county in 1874 in favour of the measure, " . . . when I came forward without any promise of Roman Catholic support."¹⁸⁹ Furthermore, he pointed out that a Liberal candidate without the denominational issue in his platform, would be seized upon by certain parties as a pretence for putting forward a Home Rule candidate.

Power's reply was satisfactorily received by Clow who wrote back to him that he would not only vote for him, but that he would also support him. He warned Power that it was essential that he make a canvass of the area and address a few meetings in that vicinity. As had already been pointed out to Power by Tod, the Presbyterians were a very clannish lot, and they would have to be persuaded to support a member of the Church of Ireland. To vote for Givan was natural as

188 Ibid.

189 Ibid., Power to Clow, 20 February, 1880.

he was a Presbyterian, but Power would have to court their vote. He was at a disadvantage in so far as there was virtually no tradition of tenant farmers who were members of the old Established Church voting for a Liberal.¹⁹⁰ This was to be the election of the Land Question, and the tenant farmer was now the most important factor in the electoral stakes. With sectarian voting patterns fairly well established by this period, Power could not rely upon these to see him safely home; the large majority of Church of Ireland votes would be going against Power. The traditional area where this denomination was strong, in the west and north-west, was a very Orange part of the county and one where the Conservative might expect to pick up the overwhelming majority of Church of Ireland votes.¹⁹¹ This meant that the area where Power was personally known was one where he might expect to pick up a minority of his support. The vast majority of potential Power voters differed from him in religion, in social origins, and even in geographic location.

By now the machinations which inevitably accompanied an Irish election were well underway. A tenant farmers' meeting in Portadown was viewed by the loyalists as an unnecessary provocation. Prior to the meeting a manifesto was issued by the Orangemen of the town calling for " . . . the loyalists of Portadown and neighbourhood (to) assemble in their thousands to protest against this exhibition of sedition in a town which has so long maintained a reputation for loyalty to the Throne and Constitution."¹⁹² As might be expected, there was a meeting which was met with opposition by the Orangemen of Portadown who marched behind a drumming party to the field where the tenant meeting was being held and after a brief struggle captured the platform which was then destroyed.

190 An exception to this general rule might be upon the Dartry estates where Church of Ireland tenants might follow their landlords and support the Liberals. This was of no relevance in the 1880 election as Dartry had already indicated to Power that he could not support him. See above,

191 Presbyterians were strongest in eastern and central Monaghan, The Church of Ireland was the preponderant Protestant denomination in the west, and also the northern and southern tips of Monaghan where Protestants were few.

192 Northern Whig, 23 February, 1880, p 5.

On the same day as the Orangemen of Portadown were exhibiting their loyalty, Power wrote to Mitchell asking for an explanation as to his conduct at the 1874 election. Upon further examination, Power had discovered that he was not accused of merely acquiescing in Mitchell's appointment of a polling officer for Carrickmacross, but that he misappropriated £60 as costs which was then used to prosecute the six Liberal electors who signed the petition against Shirley's returns. In his letter to Mitchell, Power stated that he had never even heard of the sum mentioned, and requested Mitchell to reply immediately with any information which he might have regarding the affair.¹⁹³ For someone in Power's position to be accused of incompetence in his dealings with a partisan underling was one thing, but to suggest that he had misappropriated a sum of money and then used it to prosecute a number of Liberal voters was to question his honesty and political integrity. Mitchell, an Orangeman and a Conservative, could not be expected to enter into the public debate at the behest of Power to clear his name. Even if he were not to positively implicate him in the affair, to simply remain silent would aid the Conservative campaign. It was clear that the increase upon the electoral register had greatly aided the Liberals, and this, coupled with the Presbyterian revolt¹⁹⁴ against the Tory land policy meant that the prospects of the two Conservative candidates did not look very promising. If the Aghabog incident could be drawn out to such an extent that Power was forced to withdraw, and the Liberal party had to look for another candidate then this would lessen their chance of taking both seats in the election. This had been the case in 1868 when a desperate effort to find a Liberal candidate led to the selection of a poor nominee, late in the day, and a subsequent Liberal loss of the seat which had been gained at the previous election.

However, Power was still a candidate at this stage. He had, he hoped, got a large amount of the Catholic vote and with the support of the Bishop he might have enough support to win a seat. The Presbyterians would be likely to offer Givan their first vote, but

193 TD 4636/B/4, Power to Mitchell, 24 February, 1880.

194 Ibid, Tod to Power, 23 February, 1880, stated that she was " . . . absolutely astonished at what I hear of the awakening of independence on the part of the farmers"

they also seemed likely to support him as the correspondence with various of their leaders indicated. His stance upon the temperance issue was strong enough to add to his appeal with this section of the voters. Tod had written to most of the Liberal-inclined Presbyterian ministers and there was no reason to believe that the Liberal candidates, or Power, in particular, would suffer the same fate as had Cremorne in 1865 - that of the Presbyterian voters recanting on their electoral pledges. As noted above,¹⁹⁵ the presence of Wall at the Monaghan meeting indicated a Presbyterian input into the selection process, and Power had been able to contribute to the achievement of W Moffat Clow. Power's hand was further strengthened by the fact that M N Wall had decided to act upon his election committee.

Givan wrote to Power on 28 February from Dublin stating that there was to be a large Liberal meeting in Monaghan town on Thursday, 5 March. The format was for a platform to be erected at the Rossmore monument in the Diamond opposite the Courthouse. Thursday was the day on which the Grand Jury sat, and there would be a large number of people in the town. Also, this would give Givan an opportunity to call upon some of his friends from the legal profession to speak upon his behalf, including the two prominent lawyers, W Porter QC and Mr Donnell, the author of a book upon the Land Act. Givan stressed that he would like to have as many Presbyterian ministers upon the platform as possible.¹⁹⁶ This was clearly to allay all fears of the Protestant voters that the Liberal candidates were the nominees of the Catholic party. He also dwelt upon the matter of finance and the possibility, as Power had suggested, that they fund a joint campaign. This would help to keep costs to a minimum.

Between the date of this letter and the time of the meeting Power decided to withdraw from the contest. The reasons for this decision are unclear. Some indication is evident from a letter which he received from Christina Bagerson. She wrote that both Sir Charles Dilke and Nolan were disappointed that Power was no more a candidate for Monaghan. Dilke was quite sure that Power would win, as Bagerson

¹⁹⁵ See p 376.

¹⁹⁶ TD 4636/B/4, Givan to Power, 28 February, 1880.

wrote,

He says -- you must decide whether alone or with Givan, but that you must reconsider it. . . . Nolan says they will run no Home Ruler and that you are a great loss.

197

She concluded that he should ask Dilke how he might still contest the county with dignity, having announced to his supporters that he was to withdraw.

This letter suggests that Power was unsure about his candidacy for more than one reason. Firstly, he was afraid of a Home Rule candidate who would destroy his chances of victory. Power, at least, among the Ulster Liberals was aware of the fact that with the Catholic voters the Home Rule cause had greater attraction than that of Liberalism. The fear of a Home Rule campaign had been the motivating force behind Power's visit to London when he had met with members of both the Liberal and the Irish party. Nolan must have been one of his contacts. Secondly, Power does not appear to have been altogether content with his running mate. This was not upon a personal bias, because the tone of Givan's letter of 28 February gives no impression of difficulties between the two. Rather, it appears from Dilke's comment that Power should decide whether to contest the county with Givan or alone; it was the question of finance which bothered him most. Throughout the correspondence there had been a considerable discussion of finance. Almost all his letters with Dane had dwelt upon this point. And Givan's last letter mentioned that he had written to his conducting agent asking him about the cost of a joint campaign, so Power had also been in communication with him about it. Clearly, Power was not sufficiently well-off to be able to afford an unsuccessful campaign. Lastly, the controversy over the appointment of a returning agent in the influential barony of Farney which might well cost him votes he could ill afford to lose, must have played an important part in his decision to withdraw his name from before the electors.

By the time of the Monaghan town meeting, Power's withdrawal from the campaign was known. The meeting was described as being one in favour of the candidature of John Givan 'and his colleague.'

The platform included most of the Liberal leaders in the county, James B Ross of Liscarney, the Anketells of Anketell Grove, Daniel McAleese of the People's Advocate, two Catholic clerics and two Presbyterian ministers from Aughnacloy. In addition, Givan had assembled Dodd, Porter and a David Fitzgerald of the legal profession to add weight to his platform.

The chair was taken by Rev McIlwaine of Aughnacloy who, whilst admitting that he was not from the county, stated that he had known Givan for many years and that a large number of his congregation were from Monaghan. McIlwaine pointed out that the land question was the burning issue and that all tenant farmers, the bone and sinew of Ireland, should assist one another. At which point Givan rose to laud the Liberal administration which had passed the 1870 Land Act and to present his platform; peasant proprietorship and Grand Jury Reform. He made no mention of the education question. With regard to a running mate he stated that a candidate would be appearing shortly. He continued,

Sir Tyrone Power, who at first intended to do so, felt that his age and consequent infirmity did not fit him to fight a great battle such as that which must be fought and won on the hills and plains of Monaghan - (cheers) - and fought out afterwards on the floor of the House of Commons.

198

The next to speak was another Presbyterian minister, Rev John Stinson, also from Aughnacloy. He proposed the first resolution to the effect that the only remedy to the land question was 'security of tenure and peasant proprietorship.' This resolution was seconded by Mr Porter, QC, who made the customary address. For the second resolution, Givan brought forward his first Monaghan county elector, Mr Phelan of Carrickmacross. Phelan was also the first Catholic to address the meeting. He contented himself with simply proposing the second resolution which was in favour of peasant proprietorship and the constitutional remedying of the tenants' ills. Sergeant Dodd spoke at length upon the land question until Anketell of Emyvale was brought forward. He proposed support for Givan and whoever should be chosen to run with him, and this was seconded by Henry Overend of Farney. Overend stated that he hoped that Givan would be elected

and then continued,

Neither Protestant nor Roman Catholic should be afraid of landlords. (Hear, hear). There was not a Protestant in Farney that did not do his duty on the last occasion and give his vote to the Conservative. (Laughter.) However, he could tell them now there was not a Protestant in Farney that was not determined to vote for the Tenant-righter . . .

199

It is difficult to assess such a statement. It was made, after all, at a Liberal party meeting, but the degree of victory which the two Liberals were to achieve indicates that a large number of Protestant tenant farmers must have supported the Liberals. This statement also indicates the attitude which the Protestants of Farney had held towards John Madden's Home Rule campaign. Madden had indicated that it was the collapse of his support in Farney which had cost him the election, and if Overend is to be believed, then it was the Protestant as well as the Catholic vote which left him. The stance of the Protestants towards Madden in 1874 is also emphasised by the 1883 by-election result when there were few Protestant votes for Tim Healy's candidacy.

The opening meeting in the Liberal campaign in Monaghan could be described as a success. There was a large and enthusiastic crowd, whilst the speakers appeared to indicate that Givan had the support of both Catholics and Presbyterians. However, there was still the problem of who was to be his running mate. There had been a meeting on Thursday, 11 March, to attempt to find a substitute.²⁰⁰ This had been held in the Christian Brothers' School in Monaghan town and it was agreed that anyone who wanted the nomination had to present himself to the Liberal delegates at Castleblayney Chapel on 16 March. The successful nominee would have to give a written guarantee that he would contest the seat and not withdraw on any pretext.

The editorial in the People's Advocate of the same date emphasised the need for a campaign to increase the legal support given to the tenant farmers. It was imperative for the Liberal candidates that the tenants of Monaghan recognise that they required further

199 Ibid.

200 People's Advocate, 13 March, 1880, p 5.

legal endorsement of tenant right in Ulster. Thus the journal laboured the point that the Ulster tenant right was severely limited by 'office rules.' As an example the paper took the Rossmore estate and it ironically stated,

Labour stoutly, ye brawny-handed, sunburnt yeomen on my Lord Rossmore's acres. Drive the glancing coulter deep into the loamy soil. Delve with the might and main of honest sons of Adam, cordialling your brown crust with the sweat of manly toil. Unwearying work; for, is there not for you the golden reward of FIVE POUNDS an acre for your Tenant-right?

201

The argument was lengthy and it went over the theme of the method in which the landlords were able to frustrate the working of the 1870 act. It was imperative for the Liberals to persuade the tenant farmers that they were suffering under an unjust system which required the activities of John Givan and his colleague, 'whoever that colleague may be.'

Needless to say, there was considerable speculation as to who would be Power's successor. The most often predicted companion for Givan was Charles Russell who had twice contested Dundalk against Phil Callan. On 10 March, the Londonderry Standard,²⁰² the voice of the Presbyterian Liberal tenant farmers, claimed that Givan and Russell would be the two Liberal party nominees. The following day the Fermanagh Mail expressed the same opinion.²⁰³ The People's Advocate made no prediction other than that the candidate would be required to guarantee that he would not withdraw. The Northern Standard mentioned both Russell and a Mr Findlater of Dublin. Russell, it pointed out, was the thrice rejected candidate for Dundalk. The journal also stated that the name of the second Liberal party nominee was as unknown to Givan as it was to anyone else.²⁰⁴

The man who should have had the surest knowledge of who would stand was Bishop Donnelly. On 11 March, he attended a meeting of the committee of the County Monaghan Liberal Association, and they

201 People's Advocate, 13 March, 1880, p 4.

202 Londonderry Standard, 10 March, 1880, p 2.

203 Fermanagh Mail, 11 March, 1880, p 2.

204 Northern Standard, 13 March, p 3.

decided to 'convoke a Co. meeting at Castleblayney for 16 inst.'²⁰⁵ Three days later Donnelly was visited by Russell, who brought with him a number of Newry people to argue his case. Included in the entourage was Hoey of Newry. Donnelly makes no explanation as to who Hoey was, but it is likely that he was related to Canon Hoey of Carrickmacross. The following day Donnelly had a further two interviews with Russell, and also one with Givan.²⁰⁶ He then met the Monaghan delegates to the Castleblayney meeting in the curates' house and they talked over their strategy for the meeting to be held the next day.²⁰⁷ From this it would appear that Donnelly favoured Russell for the second place on the ticket. A somewhat inconclusive entry the following day, reads,

Second meeting in Castleblayney to select a substitute for Sir W Power withdrawn. Hurra! Russell QC and Fottrell called.

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Donnelly's attitude is difficult to glean from those few lines, but he was certainly not unhappy at the possibility of Russell contesting Monaghan in conjunction with Givan. After all, if he did, and was successful, then he would have the honour of being the first Catholic ever to represent the county at Westminster.

Throughout the first few months of 1880 the hardship which the tenants faced did not abate in Monaghan. On Christmas eve Madden had given each of his tenants a glass of whisky and one pound of deer meat each, " . . . this was done as many of the poorer classes are in great distress at present."²⁰⁹ The county was subjected to distress and famine which was widespread in south and west Ulster.

205 Donnelly's Diary, 11 March, 1880.

206 Ibid, 15 March, 1880.

207 Ibid.

208 Ibid, 16 March, 1880.

209 Madden's Diary, 24 December, 1879.

On 5 January, the Cavan Union requested permission from the local Poor Law Board to offer outdoor relief to 150 able-bodied men, there being such widespread distress in the area.²¹⁰ On the same day, it was reported that tremendous hardship was being experienced in the Ballyshannon area.²¹¹ The situation in Donegal was becoming critical and famine was reported to be widespread in Milford and Letterkenny areas.²¹² On 15 January, a bread cart going to the poor house in Sligo was attacked and its contents stolen by a starving crowd.²¹³ On 22 January, Madden received an appeal from the Cloone Relief Committee asking for aid.²¹⁴ He replied that he was not in a position to aid at present,²¹⁵ but received a further letter on 29 January renewing the request.²¹⁶ On the same day the Fermanagh Mail recorded further distress in Ballyshannon and Letterkenny, as well as Bundoran.²¹⁷ Two days after that, there was a food riot in Donegal town.²¹⁸ On 5 February, a curate at Glangevlin, county Cavan reported that of 360 families in that part of the Enniskillen Union, a total of 300 were either starving or close to it.²¹⁹ There was, he reported, no seed potatoes in the area, no credit to be had, no fuel and as a result, the people had to resort to burning heather.²²⁰ South and west Fermanagh became so badly affected that at a meeting of the Enniskillen Board of Guardians it was agreed,

that we believe that great distress exists in the Electoral Divisions of Aghnaglack, Derrylester, Glenkeel, Kinawley,

210 Fermanagh Mail, 5 January, 1880, p 2.

211 Ibid.

212 Londonderry Standard, 14 January, 1880, p 2.

213 Fermanagh Mail, 15 January, 1880, p 4.

214 Madden's Diary, 22 January, 1880.

215 Ibid, 22 January, 1880.

216 Ibid, 29 January, 1880.

217 Fermanagh Mail, 29 January, 1880, p 2.

218 Londonderry Standard, 31 January, 1880, p 2.

219 Fermanagh Mail, 5 February, 1880, p 2.

220 Ibid.

Drumaire, Kinglass, Monea, Ross, Old Barr and Doagh; and that employment is urgently needed; and we request the Local Government Board to schedule the Divisions as distressed in order to the holding of special Baronial Sessions for the baronies of Glenawley and Magheraboy to institute works for the employment of the people.

221

Madden found it necessary to give firewood and other essentials to his tenantry.²²²

All of this suggests that south Ulster was having a particularly difficult time. Fermanagh, Cavan, Donegal and Monaghan were all suffering the vicissitudes of famine. Donnelly summed up the position in Monaghan in a letter to the Fermanagh Mail in acknowledgement of a sum of £50 received for the county from the Irish Relief Association; dated 25 February, the bishop noted,

. . . four or five months ago we had comparatively little destitution in the counties of Monaghan and Fermanagh, and hoping, as we did, to tide over the season without aid from abroad, no cry for help was raised amongst us. Thus it happens that though our condition has been sadly changed, and though distress has spread itself more or less extensively over every parish in this diocese, scarcely anyone seems to think of us, and the alms of the world continue to pour into those districts where the cry of destitution was raised at the outset . . . owing to the want of food and raiment, the attendance at the National Schools amongst us has fallen off by nearly one-third - considerably more than even the counties of Kerry, Galway, Mayo or Donegal.

223

This suggestion, by a man who would have been completely in command of the facts, indicates that in the immediate run-up to the election poverty was becoming acute in Monaghan. This belief is supported by the report that at the March meeting of the Carrickmacross Poor Law Guardians over 500 people applied for relief.²²⁴ This infuriated the rate payers of the area to such an extent that they rioted and the RIC had to protect the guardians from the

221 Ibid, 19 February, 1880, p 4.

222 Madden's Diary, 9 February, 1880.

223 Fermanagh Mail, 1 March, 1880, p 3.

224 Northern Whig, 5 March, 1880, p 4. The Londonderry Standard also carried a report of the incident on 6 March.

infuriated crowd. Relief committees were set up in each town in the county and the local newspapers carried numerous reports during this period of meetings of the local groups to combat destitution in their area. In addition, Donnelly was involved in a number of relief giving agencies during the first half of 1880.

All of these difficulties which Ireland faced were viewed as resulting from one cause, and that was the unsatisfactory nature of land tenure. The question was how to alter it, and the most efficacious method would be to return Liberal representatives. The Conservative phalanx no longer appeared to be so secure. But the Liberals also had worries. In the north the Tories feared that they would lose much ground to their traditional enemies, whilst the Liberals feared that in the three southern provinces they would be completely routed by the Home Rulers. It was also felt that in the counties the more extreme nationalists would gain strength whilst in the boroughs the moderates would do well. In the north the Conservatives could not rely simply upon the Orangemen to do their duty. As the Times pointed out, " . . . much as they reverence strong Protestant principles, it may be said without any disrespect to them that in view of an election they think more of their material interests."²²⁵

On 8 March Parliament was officially dissolved and the fight over the constituencies livened up. With Westminster closed there was little opportunity for the incumbents to use their position to advantage. There was no longer any excuse for being away from your seat. From henceforward the struggle for the representation was to be at its thickest. In an attempt to rally the Protestant cause in the north, the Earl of Beaconsfield had sent an open letter to the Chief Secretary, Marlborough, in which he stated his belief that in Ireland there was a choice between law and order and anarchy, and that the main intention of the Home Rule party was to dismember the Empire.²²⁶ Needless to say, this created a storm in Ireland. Not only did the Home Rulers take offence, the Marquis of Hartington mentioned the fact in his manifesto to the electors of North-East Lancashire whom

²²⁵ London Times, 11 March, 1880, p 13.

²²⁶ The Prime Minister's address was published in all the Irish Conservative papers. See, for example, Northern Standard, 13 March, 1880, p 4.

he represented in parliament. He was quite clear that Home Rule meant nothing of the sort. But the strongest denunciation of Beaconsfield's address came from Mr Shaw, the leader of that party. It was, he asserted, an attempt to misrepresent the people of Ireland, and he continued,

We mean by Home Rule not that the connexion between the two countries should be destroyed but that the relationship may be placed on a healthy and natural and honest basis; and we seek this object by strictly legal and constitutional means.

227

The Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain was more blunt. In a manifesto issued to the Irish electors in Britain and Ireland it claimed that Beaconsfield had declared war upon the Irish people, and that the Irish should, "Vote against Benjamin Disraeli as you should vote against the mortal enemy of your country and of your race."²²⁸

The antipathy between the Conservatives and the Home Rulers had been simmering in Ireland for some time. A M Sullivan had made a speech at Liverpool in which he claimed that the Home Government Association had been founded by, for the most part, Conservatives who were unhappy with the spoliation of their church. This had led to a furore in England with requests coming from the English Tories for Sullivan to prove his statement, which unfortunately, he proceeded to do. A correspondence²²⁹ was entered into in the press between Sullivan and a number of Irish Conservatives, including D R Plunkett,²³⁰ the late member for Dublin University, and James Poole Maunsell, the son of Dr Henry Maunsell.²³¹ During this public debate

227 London Times, 10 March, 1880, p 10.

228 Northern Whig, 11 March, 1880, p 5.

229 This correspondence was reported in most of the newspapers; see, for example, Times, 9 and 11 February, and Northern Whig, 6 February.

230 Hon D R Plunkett QC sat as the Conservative for Dublin University from 1870-1895. In 1874 he was appointed Attorney General for Ireland, and the following year he became Lord Chancellor. In 1875 he was also made Solicitor General, and in 1885 he became Chief Commissioner of Works, and First Commissioner in 1886. He was created Lord Rathmore in 1895.

231 Maunsell's father had been Dr Henry Maunsell, editor of Dublin Evening Mail.

it emerged that Mr Roe, the Conservative agent in Dublin had donated £500 towards Rossa's expenses during the Tipperary election of 1869. One of the Conservatives who had remained in the Home Rule fold after the general exodus of Tories in 1874 was Sir George Bowyer. He had sat for Wexford county as a Home Rule MP since 1874, but he now wrote to the press that the present policy of the nationalists, that of the Land League, made his support for the movement no longer possible. For such men as Bowyer, this, ". . . foolish, mischievous and unbecoming course . . . has rendered it absurd in the eyes of thoughtful practical men, and intolerable to England and Scotland".²³² The activities of the Land Leaguers in the west had so infuriated Bower that although a Home Rule MP, his class consciousness as a land owner induced him to drop his political allegiance.²³³

By the beginning of the second week in March the campaign was livening up. There was still no definite decision as to who would be the replacement for Power. Russell appeared to be the main contender. On 10 March, for example, his name was printed in the London Times as opposing Leslie and Shirley in the Liberal interest. However, two days later the same journal named William Findlater from Dublin as the most likely running mate for Mr Givan. It claimed that Mr Russell was no longer going to stand in Monaghan because he had been considered as unacceptable by the "local Tenant Right Committee."²³⁴ Then the following week the Times reported that Russell had arrived in Monaghan and that he was carrying out a vigorous canvass of the county.²³⁵

²³² London Times, 15 March, 1880, p 12.

²³³ London Times, 15 March, 1880, p 12. The letter was subsequently published in Northern Standard, 20 March, 1880, p 4. Bowyer was at best a reluctant member of the Home Rule League. He 'joined' before the 1874 general election, but by the beginning of 1876 had still not paid any subscription. See, D213, 'Home Rule League Letterbook, pps 115 and 145. During the sessions 1874-1880 he had sat on the government benches and took the government whip. In 1877 he wrote to Disraeli that he could not have been returned without a Home Rule principle; see, Thornley, Isaac Butt and Home Rule, p 196.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Ibid., 17 March, 1880, p 13.

This would seem likely. From Donnelly's entries in his diary it would appear that he was quite favourably disposed to Russell's candidacy.²³⁶ So the latter's failure to finally get the nomination was indicative of on-the-ground opposition to him of the sort suggested by the Times. The Northern Standard of 13 March mentioned both Russell and William Findlater of Dublin as being linked with the seat.²³⁷ It must have realised that there was a certain amount of disagreement in the Liberal ranks because it reported that

. . . the name of the gentleman who will ultimately share with Mr Givan the patronage of the bishop is enshrouded in impenetratable mystery, and will not be divulged until he flashes upon the political horizon like a comet with a tail resembling a political manifesto.

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The Standard also stated that Findlater²³⁹ had been interested in the Tyrone seat, but that he had failed to get the nomination there. The editorial also pointed out that Findlater's 'interests and those of pale ale are not vastly dissimilar.'²⁴⁰

The question of who was to be the other Liberal candidate was finally answered on St Patrick's Day when a large open air meeting of Liberal electors was held in Carrickmacross in favour of the candidature of Givan and Findlater. According to the People's Advocate, there was a crowd of over 20,000 present.²⁴¹ The platform party included county Liberals like William Ancketell and James B Ross, clerics like Canon Hoey, Dean McMahon and the curates of the

236 However, it must be remembered that Donnelly's correspondence indicates that he was a personal friend of Phil Callan, of Dundalk. Callan and Russell were by this time sworn enemies. Russell finally contested Dundalk again in 1880 and defeated Callan.

237 Northern Standard, 13 March, 1880, p 3.

238 Ibid.

239 William Findlater, younger Son of William Findlater of Londonderry, who was the head of a prominent firm of wine merchants in Dublin. He was a solicitor, having been admitted in 1846. In 1878 he was elected President of the Incorporated Law Society of Ireland. He was the senior partner in the law firm, Findlater and Blood of Dublin, and had been spoken of as a possible candidate for that seat as well as Tyrone. In his biography in the Northern Whig, published on 15 April, 1880, he had the good sense to claim to be a nephew of the famous brewer.

240 Northern Standard, 13 March, 1880, p 3.

241 People's Advocate, 20 March, 1880, p 1.

neighbourhood, leaders of the Farney Tenants' Defence Association like Gartlan and Phelan, as well as Carrickmacross Poor Law Guardians, solicitors and a few outsiders who were there to indicate their personal support for the two candidates. Amongst this latter group was Thomas Dickson, MP, who could be described as the most prominent Ulster Protestant Liberal, and Charles Russell, QC, who had himself hoped to be nominated.

After Gartlan was moved to the chair, and the usual formalities were observed, Russell was introduced to the crowd. His name elicited thunderous applause, and he was obviously delighted at his reception. Russell commenced by saying that up to yesterday he had expected to address them in another capacity; an obvious reference to his frustrated attempt to gain the nomination. He stated that he was there with others to raise his voice in harmony against Tory domination, but not once did he mention either Givan or Findlater by name; nor did he show his support for 'the Liberal candidates in Monaghan.' Nevertheless, his presence upon the platform gave a semblance of endorsement of Givan and Findlater by Russell.²⁴²

Dickson who followed Russell did mention the candidates by name, and urged the electors of Monaghan to vote for them. He gave the usual election speech in which he dwelt upon the failings of the Tories both locally and nationally. Dickson viewed himself, by this stage, as the leader of the Ulster Liberals, and he was clearly of the opinion that it was his lot to ensure that the Liberal representation from the province of Ulster was maximised. It was for this reason that he had organised the Liberal nomination in Monaghan, in so far as going to see Donnelly and the local party members was concerned.

Givan was the first of the two candidates to address the meeting. It was, he stated, the first time that he had made a public appearance in the barony of Farney. However, he was there now to address them in the cause which they all held dear. As with most political speeches

²⁴² Also on the platform was Canon Hoey whose endorsement was an essential factor in receiving support in Farney. It was he, more than any other who had stopped Power. The Northern Standard described the platform party as consisting of 25 people - One MP, eight lawyers, six priests, one Presbyterian minister, six Catholic laymen, two Protestant laymen, and one Plymouth Brethern; see that journal, 20 March, 1880, p 3.

he offered the electors the right blend of personal data, political dogma and praise for his listeners. The major concentration in Givan's speech was an attack upon the system of land tenure in Ireland.

Findlater was the next to speak, and he prefaced his remarks by admitting that he had never seen Farney before, and that the Farney men had never seen him. His speech was similar to Givan's, and he railed against the Land Act and the county cess. But Findlater was at a disadvantage in that Givan was well known in the county and he had been conducting an unofficial campaign since January. Findlater's problem was that up to 16 March, he was not even sure of the Liberal nomination. Up to this meeting the Liberal electors had no idea of who would finally represent them at the polls. The actual polling day in the Monaghan election was to be 8 April, which was but three weeks away. This would surely mitigate against Findlater.²⁴² Another factor working against him was that he was an outsider. He was a solicitor from Dublin, but unlike Givan he had never practiced in the Monaghan area. Givan, for example, had been involved in the first land case in the county, brought under the 1870 Land Act. And if all this was not enough, Findlater was a member of a prominent brewing and wine distributing company. One could hardly imagine W Moffat Clow voting for a member of a leading brewing family.²⁴³

Whilst the Liberals were attempting to find suitable candidates for the contest, the Conservatives did not have the same difficulty. Sir John Leslie and Sewallis Evelyn Shirley, the two sitting members, announced their intention to place themselves again before the electors for consideration to represent the county in the Conservative interest. In a letter which Power received from Givan, dated 22 January, 1880, the writer mentioned,

Sir John Leslie has already commenced his canvass and his agents - the bailiffs - are at work in every part of the county. ²⁴⁴

²⁴² The Northern Standard claimed that Findlater was not even a Presbyterian, 'having left that Church to worship in the more fashionable Leeson Park Church of Ireland, Dublin in which congregation he was appointed a trustee. See Northern Standard, 20 March, 1880, p 3.

²⁴³ The Clow family was prominent in milling and scutching in the Emyvale area. Clow was originally from Scotland and thus, like the other leading Presbyterian Liberals in north Monaghan, an outsider. Telephone conversation with Mr John Brew, Belfast, a grandson of W M Moffat Clow.

²⁴⁴ PRONI Givan to Power, TD 4636/B/4, 22 January, 1880.

Whilst we must beware of the obvious bias which is inherent in such correspondence, this is an indication that Leslie was already organising his supporters at an early date. He must have been aware that if the Conservatives were to hold on to either of the two county seats then they would have to be very active, and from a very early juncture.

Both sides sent out circular letters, asking for support, in mid-March,²⁴⁶ and these were accompanied by the election addresses. Givan and Findlater issued a joint address; considering how lately the latter had entered the field, this is not surprising. There was nothing unusual in the Liberal document. The two candidates were in favour of the Three Fs, an opportunity for the tenant farmers "to become the Owners of their Holdings by Loans from Government, the abolition of distress for rent, and lastly the reform of the Grand Jury system, and its substitution by a number of boards elected by the cess payers." This was a particularly salient point in Monaghan because at the last meeting of the Grand Jury on 2 March, a number of men had tendered for the job of lifting the county cess rate at 6d in the pound. However, the Grand Jury decided to give the task to someone else who was to charge 9d in the pound.²⁴⁷ It was this type of patronage to which the Liberals had no access, which they wished to destroy.

The Conservative addresses made no mention of Grand Jury Reform, although it was generally believed by each of the major parties that some sort of reform was necessary. Both Shirley and Leslie advocated the support of the Intermediate Education Bill. With regard to the land question, both claimed to be in favour of measures which would ease the position of the tenant farmer.

. 246 Givan and Findlater's joint address and circular letter was dated 17 March, Leslie's letter was dated 15 March although his address was not dated, and Shirley dated neither circular letter nor address. In addition, the Conservative agents circulated potential supporters on 16 inst, requesting attendance at various committee meetings. Thus the formal election apparatus appears to have been set in motion by both sides in mid-March. Copies of these documents are to be found in the Madden Papers, Hilton Park, Clones.

247 This was asserted in a speech of Givan's given at the Liberal meeting in the Diamond in Monaghan town. See, Northern Whig, 5 March, 1880, p 6.

Shirley stated that he favoured improvement of the 1870 Land Act (which the Liberals asserted to be not nearly sufficient). He also was in favour of the tenant right bill which Macartney was at the time of dissolution, pushing through parliament. It clarified the Ulster custom and went some way towards the Three Fs, but again it was not viewed as the final solution to the land problem by the tenant farmers. Leslie's credentials upon the land issue were more impressive. He also favoured amendment of the 1870 Act so as to clarify the legal position of the tenant. He had sat upon the Select Committee of the House of Commons to enquire into the Bright Clauses, and he claimed to have voted for their extension. He advocated Tenant Right at the expiration of leases and was, " . . . prepared to support any reasonable attempt to improve the condition of the occupiers of the soil by honest legislation. My sympathy is entirely with the Tenant Farmers of Ireland."²⁴⁸ But apart from the pro forma letters which all candidates sent out, the more important members of the electorate were also contacted personally. One such individual from the Conservative point of view was John Madden of Hilton. He had been an adversary in the last general election, but it was known that the conservative members of the Home Rule League had become disenchanted with the movement and left. Those who had remained after the 1874 election had felt their position untenable once the land agitation commenced. On 13 March Leslie had written to Madden hoping for support. In it he asserted that he had written to no-one else as yet. He then went on,

To have your support & approval would I confess be in my estimation a very great comfort in the present state of political affairs in our County.

The earnestness & courage which you have shewn in dealing with Public Affairs has always commanded my respect, & if the progress of events should have developed reasons in your mind which should enable you to give the Present Representative of the County your support - I shall, for one of them, feel the great importance & value of the principles I hold that will be gained thereby.

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²⁴⁸ The electoral correspondence and copies of the addresses of the candidates are all taken from the Madden documents which are deposited at Hilton. They also appeared in the local press. See People's Advocate, 20 March, 1880, p 4, and, Northern Standard, 20 March, 1880, p 1.

²⁴⁹ Madden documents, letter from John Leslie to John Madden, 13 March, 1880.

Whereas one would expect an appeal for aid to eulogise its recipient to some extent, there is clearly more significance attached to such a letter to Madden. The stance which he had taken over the Deputy Lieutenantship and his removal from his commissions of the peace by O'Hagan had created a great deal of sympathy for him within the Protestant community of south Ulster. His treatment at the hand of Ireland's English administrators had led him to go even further and join the Home Rulers, but now that he was no longer involved with them there was a feeling that his activities, although somewhat eccentric, were understandable. Throughout the previous decade he had shown himself willing to stand by his principles and to convert them into action, no matter how unpopular they might be. But there was another reason why Madden's support was important, and this was because of the possibility of his being able to influence his tenantry to vote in a particular manner. The Liberals had constantly stated that the ballot was now secret no matter what the landlords claimed. This was to ensure that the ordinary voter did not follow the tradition of a lifetime and vote for the nominee of his landlord. However, even if there was no longer any method of ensuring tenant support for landlord nominated candidates, tenants might still be persuaded to vote for specific candidates on the strength of their personal admiration for their landlord. This was even more likely if the landlord was a good one, as Madden appears to have been.

Leslie was not alone in recognising the worth of Madden's support. Shirley's father, E P S Shirley wrote to him on 15 March. He asked Madden what he proposed to do.

"Lelsie and my son", he stated, "are opposed by a Mr Givan, a Tyrone solicitor, who is in favour, as appears from his speeches, of extreme Tenant Right principles & also of that craze 'Peasant Proprietors.' I feel sure you will not agree to this, so I confidently hope that you will support my son?

Givan is good enough to state that he does not adopt the extreme doctrines against the landlords expounded in the west of Ireland, as will still allow us in a sort of way to have our estates. There is to be another candidate, who I suppose will be on the Romans side, but his name is not yet announced.

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250 Ibid, E P Shirley to John Madden, 15 March, 1880. The following day Madden received a letter from George Knight. He had been involved in the Madden campaign of 1874 and had now returned to his original political position. Knight requested permission to place Madden's name upon the Conservative election committee. Madden never answered this letter; see, ibid, Knight to Madden, 16 March, 1880.

Shirley's father was a friend of Madden's and his son hoped that a personal appeal would assure him Madden's vote. Shirley felt certain that as a substantial landowner Madden could not support Givan or his confederate.

Madden replied to Leslie that he could not support anyone until he had seen copies of their respective addresses, and Leslie then sent his to Hilton Park. Upon receipt of this, Madden replied that whereas there were certain points with which he did not agree, he had decided that it was important to support Lord Beaconsfield's government and that he would thus be voting for the Conservative candidates.²⁵¹ The major reason for Madden's reticence was that the Tories were in favour of Macartney's Land Bill which would automatically give the tenant a tenant's right under the Ulster custom if he chose to exert it. This Madden saw as a direct assault upon the rights of property, something which he had predicted long ago. He went on,

. . . & I may tell you frankly what induced me, and many others, to take the stand made on a former occasion, was simply because I for one, saw, as I see now, that all English parties were one as little to be trusted as the other where Ireland is concerned - & if the so called English 'liberal' party are defeated now you may thank the Home Rule movement for it . . . I feel bound to add with equal frankness . . . that the moment in fact that the interests of the Conservative party may seem to require it - They will throw over both you and me & all of us here in Ire.

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Madden continued that Disraeli was only supporting Macartney's Bill in an attempt to gain votes in Ulster and that all English parties would do this. What Madden wished was for Ireland to enjoy the same laws as England, and he contended that a tenant right bill would never be tolerated in England.

Madden's views, then, were similar to those held by so many of the Conservative Home Rulers. It was their basic conservatism which induced them to join the Home Government Association in the first place, and this same conservatism which made their position untenable once the movement gravitated inevitably towards a populist base and a reforming policy.

²⁵¹ Ibid, draft of letter sent to both Shirley and Leslie, 18 March, 1880.

²⁵² Ibid.

It was expected that the contest in Monaghan would be a close run thing. Givan and Findlater had the temper of the times on their side, and it is clear that their claim that the majority of electors for the county were Liberals, was quite true. On the other hand, Leslie and Shirley were the sitting members, and it was admitted that both were reasonable landlords. Both were resident, and there was a strong tradition of support for their families at elections.

Because of the swiftness of Beaconsfield's dissolution of parliament, the campaign would be a relatively short one. The Liberal party nomination was only decided on 16 March, and was publicly set in motion at Carrickmacross on St Patrick's Day. This left three weeks of heavy campaigning until polling day. During the next three weeks the candidates would speak in all the major towns in the county, posters would be pasted on every blank wall and the press would be full of letters, editorials and comments on the respective merits of the four candidates.

The major factor in the Liberals' campaign to win the two seats was the alliance which had been formed between the Presbyterians and Catholics. To this end the Liberal meeting at Castleblayney had endorsed two Presbyterian Liberals. In fact, as the Northern Standard had noted, Findlater was not a Presbyterian, he having joined Leeson Park Church of Ireland.²⁵³ This was a fact which might reduce his attractiveness to the Presbyterian voters of Monaghan. The other method of undermining the position of Findlater was to refer to both him and Givan as the nominees of Bishop Donnelly. To this end on 20 March the Standard carried a report that the decision of who would get the nomination with Givan was decided in Monaghan on Monday, 15 March by Donnelly, and that although six men placed their names before the meeting, Findlater was already the favoured running mate for Givan. The correspondent asked,

What will the electors say when I tell them that the bills, with his (Findlater's) name and Givan's, were printed and ready for posting long before the news from Castleblayney arrived here by telegram.

254

253 Northern Standard, 20 March, 1880, p 3.

254 Ibid.

The meeting which he referred to was recorded by Donnelly simply as, 'met Delegates house of C Cs - talked over business of tomorrows meeting.'²⁵⁵

Whether or not it is true that the posters or handbills were printed before the selection meeting, it is clear that it would have taken an extraordinary revolt for the wishes of the bishop to be ignored. However, if Findlater was certain of the nomination on the strength of the canvassing undertaken by Donnelly, then this indicates that Russell was specifically denied the nomination for Monaghan by the local bishop.

Throughout the entire campaign the question of land tenure was the major issue. The Liberals pushed this issue as frequently as they could. They had in John Givan the man to fight the tenants' case at Westminster as he did in the courts of south Ulster. To counter this threat the Conservative candidates produced addresses which endorsed tenant right. Leslie stated that he was in favour of an amendment to the Land Act of 1870 so as to 'more clearly define the Tenant's Right, so as to avoid useless and expensive litigation.'²⁵⁶ Shirley similarly advocated amendment of the act of 1870 which had met with universal tenant disapproval when it passed into law. He added that as the government was in favour of McCartney's bill he hoped that a measure would be quickly brought before Westminster and pledged that he would support it.²⁵⁷

The land question was the one major issue which could gain support from the Catholic and Presbyterian farmers. The Land League was at that time holding large meetings throughout the country to protest at the system of land tenure. The apex of the campaign had been reached on Sunday, 14 March when a massive demonstration was organised in the Phoenix Park. The fact that the People's Advocate reproduced a long report of the meeting, taken from the Freeman's Journal suggests how important the issue was seen by the Liberals and Catholics of Monaghan.²⁵⁸ In addition, the Land League had issued

²⁵⁵ Donnelly's Diary, 15 March, 1880.

²⁵⁶ Election Address of Sir John Leslie, Northern Standard, 20 March, 1880, p 2.

²⁵⁷ 'Election Address of S E Shirley,' in ibid.

²⁵⁸ People's Advocate, 20 March, 1880, p 2.

a manifesto which urged all Irishmen to vote against the friends of landlordism, whether they be Tory or Whig.²⁵⁹

The major activity of both sides was to persuade the Presbyterians to vote the right way. The People's Advocate constantly stressed the need for greater fixity of tenure and free sale at a fair rent. It reminded the readers that the tenant farmer class was downtrodden by landlords such as Leslie and Shirley, and called upon all farmers to support the Liberal candidates. Each week the editorials in the People's Advocate reiterated this theme that the present land system was inequitable and that the Catholics and Presbyterians of Monaghan must unite to rid the county of the Conservative members.²⁶⁰ In addition, there was a concerted effort throughout the campaign to have Presbyterian speakers on the Liberal platform throughout the county, but especially in the Presbyterian districts. The first major meeting in the Liberal campaign was held in Carrickmacross on 17 March, and during the proceedings the priest of the parish, Canon Hoey embraced Henry Overend, the most prominent Presbyterian Liberal associated with the Farney Defence Association.²⁶¹ On 20 March the Liberal campaign moved to Castleblayney then on the fringe of Catholic Farney and an area where the Presbyterians were not uncommon. At this meeting Givan claimed that the religious conflict was perpetuated by the landlords to ensure that the farmers of the county could never be united enough to challenge Tory hegemony.²⁶² At Carrickroe, barony of Trough, Findlater told his audience that the only reason that Russell (who was present) was not selected at Castleblayney was because he was a Catholic and the Catholics felt that they could get greater support if they nominated another Protestant to run with Givan.²⁶³ And this theme was continued throughout the county. Givan was able to bring in two Presbyterian ministers from Aughnacloy to support his campaign, and they spoke

259 People's Advocate, 20 March, 1880, p 3.

260 Ibid, editorial comment, 27 March, 1880, p 3.

261 Ibid, 20 March, 1880, p 5.

262 Ibid, 27 March, 1880, p 4.

263 Ibid, 20 March, 1880, p 5.

at a number of Presbyterian centres in east and mid Monaghan.²⁶⁴ In Clones, Givan had a different Presbyterian minister on his platform. This minister, Rev. Wilson, like Rev. McIlwain and Rev. Stinson, stated that he was an old friend of Givan's and that he was there to support his campaign. However, much as clerical collars were a prized commodity on nineteenth century election platforms, it must have been noticed by the Presbyterian electors of Monaghan that the only locals were Catholic priests and prelates, and the Presbyterian clerics were all drafted in from outside the county.

In addition to the production of Presbyterian divines, the Liberals also recalled the number of times on which the Tories had insulted the Presbyterians. The almost complete dearth of Presbyterians in election positions was highlighted. Sir John Leslie had once dismissed the electors of Monaghan as paupers, and the People's Advocate used this phrase to some effect in reminding the Presbyterians that they were included in this insult.²⁶⁵ As to S E Shirley, it was reported that he would never appoint a Presbyterian to any official position, nor would he give his Presbyterian tenants any aid. The last charge was answered by one of Shirley's tenants who was a Presbyterian elder at Corwally Presbyterian church. He wrote to the Northern Standard that Shirley had given the Presbyterians a six acre site for a manse and that he donated £50 towards the cost of building their church. In addition, he was a regular contributor to the funds of both Presbyterian congregations in the vicinity.²⁶⁶

Needless to say, the Northern Standard was active in dissuading the Presbyterians from supporting the Liberals. As with the Advocate, the Standard published a number of editorials which attempted to dissuade the Presbyterians from uniting with the Catholic tenant farmers. The major argument used against Presbyterian support for the Liberal candidates was that they were the nominees of the Catholic bishop of Clogher. The suggestion was made that the bishop was only using the Liberal Presbyterians to ensure that the Tories were defeated on a simply sectarian line.

²⁶⁴ Rev. McIlwain and Rev. Stinson were from Aughnacloy. They spoke at Ballybay, Emyvale and Monaghan. Rev. Wilson spoke at Clones.

²⁶⁵ People's Advocate, 27 March, 1880, p 5.

²⁶⁶ Letter from Richey Lundy, Northern Standard, 3 April, 1880, p 3.

The dynamics of the argument proffered was that Donnelly had engineered the selection of Givan and Findlater. The reason that he had preferred a Protestant over a Catholic for the second seat was that it was the only way of ensuring that the undoubted Liberal strength upon the electoral register was reproduced in the securing of both seats. Thus the Presbyterians were being made tools of Donnelly in an effort to break the Protestant alliance and see more pro-Catholic members returned. The choice was up to the Presbyterians.

As we have seen, Donnelly's discussions with Madden in 1874 and Power in 1880 indicate that he was the key element in securing the anti-Tory nomination. And irrespective of whether or not the claim in the Northern Standard was true, as to the printing of the names of the candidates even before the Castleblayney meeting, the fact remains that the bishop could virtually decide in a meeting which was almost exclusively Catholic, who was to receive the nomination. Donnelly's power was virtually supreme as long as he led his flock in a direction which was not completely alien to them. On a small item like the name of the second nominee for the Liberals, it is likely that Donnelly could see his advice acted upon. If he had attempted to persuade the Catholics of Monaghan to support Leslie and Shirley he might have had a more difficult task.

The Liberals organised a strong campaign throughout the county, speaking in every area as well as conducting personal canvasses throughout the county. The Conservatives, on the other hand, were scarcely active. On 27 March, for example, the Northern Standard published a letter from a Conservative voter in Newbliss asking why the Conservatives were not holding meetings immediately after the Liberal gatherings to put forward the Tory case.²⁶⁸ Madden noted on 19 March that Clones was posted with tenant right addresses, but that there was not one published yet on the Conservative side.²⁶⁹ An examination of the Conservative journal for the county indicates that the Conservatives did not hold election meetings in public.

²⁶⁸ Letter signed 'Dartrey Man' Northern Standard, 27 March, 1880, p 3.

²⁶⁹ Madden's Diary, 19 March, 1880.

They concentrated, rather, upon personal canvasses. During the two weeks immediately prior to polling day they traversed the county requesting support. This method of electioneering was usually seen as a complement to the popular meetings throughout the county. However, the Conservative candidates appear to have covered every part of the constituency, albeit at haste. For example, after a canvass and meeting in Newbliss on Tuesday, 30 March, the candidates moved on to Drum for a short visit to the electors of that area. The following day they visited Clones where a successful canvass was held. Thereupon they went to Smithboro where they could only remain a few minutes "but during their short stay they did good work, and got many promises of support."²⁷⁰ Notwithstanding the claims of the Standard, it must be assumed that an energetic campaign would have greatly aided the Conservative cause.

An important consideration in nineteenth century elections which is sometimes overlooked is that they were not fought on one day. The general election would take about two weeks from beginning to end. This can be shortened slightly when it is remembered that the Orkney and Shetland seat, along with the two Scottish university seats of Edinburgh/Glasgow and St Andrews/Aberdeen was not declared until a few days after the rest of the results were in. However, this still means that from the first contest until all but these three above were declared there was a lapse of seven to ten days. This meant, in effect, that if the election seemed to be running very badly against one particular party, then there was little incentive for supporters of its candidates in the later constituencies to expend a great deal of effort in the return of their own candidate.

In the 1880 election the tide set in favour of the Liberals very early in the contest. On 30 March, 15 MPs were returned unopposed, whilst on the following day 59 seats were polled. By the first of April, a week before the start of polling in Monaghan, the results had already shown a marked trend against the Conservatives.

The first results to be returned for Ireland, those of Belfast, Carlow, Derry City and Tralee showed no change in the representation.²⁷¹

²⁷⁰ Northern Standard, 3 April, 1880, p 3.

²⁷¹ London Times, 2 April, 1880, p 4.

But it was to the results in Great Britain that attention was focused. The London Times noted that with one-third of the seats in the new parliament filled, that the Liberals had a majority of 31.²⁷²

Madden was able to note on 2 April that the election in England was going as badly as possible.²⁷³ This would have an effect upon the contest in Monaghan. It is impossible to gauge just how significant British election results were in determining Irish voting patterns, but it seems plausible that if there was a risk of personal violence that some voters would not make the effort to go to the polls. This might explain one striking feature of the 1880 result which was the almost total collapse of the vote cast for S E Shirley in Farney. In 1874 he received a very large number of Catholic votes from his tenants. However, in 1880 the number of votes received for Shirley in Carrickmacross correlates closely to the number of Protestants in the area. It is quite obvious that things had changed in the six years since the last contest and the clerical support for the Liberal candidates militated against Catholics supporting Shirley, but it might be supposed that some of the older Catholic voters might have given one vote to their landlord out of loyalty. The complete collapse of Shirley's Farney vote perhaps was aided by the fact that results across the water indicated that there was no chance of a Conservative government and little of Conservative victory in Monaghan.

Nomination day was Monday, 5 April, and unlike previous years it was undertaken without any haranguing of candidates, cheering and counter-cheering or disorderly conduct. Sir John Leslie was proposed by A A Murray-Ker DL JP, and seconded by A K Young MD, a doctor from Monaghan town. Amongst his assentors were Hon Peter Westenra, younger brother of Lord Rossmore and W H E Woodwright the landlord of Scotstown. Shirley was proposed by Sir Thomas Oriel Forster bart of Coolderry, son of the former MP, and seconded by John Madden of Rosslea. Givan was proposed by M N Wall and seconded by William Ancketell DL. He was assented to by Gartlan and Overend from Monaghan, John Hoey JP, a leading Catholic from Carrickmacross, and James Lester, James Clow and Richard Blakeley, three prominent Presbyterian Liberals.

²⁷² Ibid, p 7.

²⁷³ Madden's Diary, 2 April, 1880.

Findlater was proposed, seconded and assented to by the same people as Givan.²⁷⁴

The election was a particularly quiet affair.²⁷⁵ The county town was almost without electioneering paraphernalia and there was little excitement during the day. Polling was brisk and from the polls opened at 8.00 am until 10.00 am there were more votes polled than during the rest of the day. At noon it was realised that a very high percentage of the pledged voted had turned out and that the contest was particularly close. Thus the agents and workers for each camp arranged fleets of carts to travel into the outlying districts and bring in the recalcitrant voters. The Standard reported,

About two o'clock the first cheying party came back with their spoil, and from that up to five every voter who was not actually dead was carried to the poll. Old men, whose lives were not worth two days' purchase, were brought to the booths on cars, supported on each side by the Givan and Findlater canvassers; and there cannot be any doubt that the present members . . . have earned that proud distinction at the expense of the life of many a feeble old burgess. Their tottering limbs could scarce support the feeble bodies of quite a number of the 'free and independent' as they struggled up the steps to the Court-House.

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The ballot boxes were brought to the county town and left under the protection of a large number of police until the next morning. Counting began the next morning, and at 3.00 pm the result was announced. It was generally reported as,

Givan	(L)	2,239
Findlater	(L)	2,008
Leslie	(C)	1,734
Shirley	(C)	1,666

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However, the final figures showed a Liberal victory of much greater proportions. The actual result was,

²⁷⁴ Northern Standard, 10 April, 1880, p 3.

²⁷⁵ Fermanagh Mail, reported disturbances in Rockcorry and Ballytrain; see, 12 April, 1880, p 2.

²⁷⁶ Northern Standard, 10 April, 1880, p 3.

²⁷⁷ These figures were reported in Northern Whig, 10 April, 1880, and Belfast Newsletter, 10 April, 1880, p 8, in addition to the local press.

Givan	(L)	2,818
Findlater	(L)	2,545
Leslie	(C)	2,117
Shirley	(C)	2,099

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In any case, the result was a disaster for the Tories. Monaghan had always been viewed as a Conservative county and one in which the Protestant interest would always be seen as inseparable from that of the major landlords like Leslie and Shirley. The fact that so many Protestants (almost invariably Presbyterians) had voted against the landlords was a shock to the whole Conservative party in Ulster. It was exacerbated by the results in neighbouring Armagh, Tyrone and Londonderry where the Liberals each gained a seat. In Armagh, J N Richardson headed the poll due to the fact that the Conservative vote was split three ways. In Tyrone, W Ellison McCartney, a sort of tenant right Conservative and very different from the 'big house Tories' which had generally sat for that county, topped the poll. The Liberal candidate, E F Litton QC, defeated Lord Claud Hamilton for the second seat. In Londonderry county the incumbent Liberal Sir Thomas McClure retained his seat and the other Liberal, Rt Hon Hugh Law QC, topped the poll. In county Donegal Thomas Lea retained his seat and his Liberal running mate, Rev John Kinnear, DD, a former Moderator of the General Assembly, defeated the Marquis of Hamilton.

The Liberals did not do so well in the boroughs. They lost Coleraine which had been won in 1874 for the first time, and similarly in Newry, where a Catholic candidate, P G Carrill was defeated because as a strong advocate of temperance, he was unable to attract the Catholic inn-keepers of the town.²⁷⁹ Lastly, in Carrickfergus, M R Dalway who had represented the town since 1874, lost his seat to a Tory. Dalway was an unfortunate loss as he was both a Liberal and, until his election, a prominent county Antrim Orangeman.

Notwithstanding these obvious reverses, the Liberal party in Ulster could feel proud of its achievement. Tory representation in Ireland had declined from 39 in 1868, to 32 in 1874, to 25 in 1880.

278 Walker, Parliamentary Election Results in Ireland, p 306.

279 Northern Whig, 3 April, 1880, p 5.

In 1868 there had been 24 Tory seats in Ulster, 9 in Leinster, 4 in Connaught and one in Munster. There was now none in Munster, whilst in Connaught the shock of the election had taken when C Loftus Tottenham won the county Leitrim seat for the Conservatives against a three cornered nationalist endeavour, much of the rancour of which centred around Parnell's attempt to foist the Belfast Presbyterian minister, Isaac Nelson, upon the Catholic nationalists of that county. In the last two provinces, Ulster and Leinster, the Conservatives had 18 and 6 seats respectively.

In Ulster it was viewed as more significant that so many large county constituencies had been won than the unfortunate loss of the three borough seats. After all, Coleraine had only a total electorate of 435 voters, whilst Newry boasted 1,174 voters and Carrickfergus 1,411. The total vote of these three seats was but 200 more than those cast for Givan in Monaghan.²⁸⁰ It was suggested that some of the blame for Liberal failures in the north was due to the ineffectiveness of the Ulster Liberal Society, although in fact, the loss of the three boroughs was more due to extreme exertion on the part of the Conservatives, as opposed to Liberal ineffectiveness. In Belfast the Liberals were at a disadvantage as there had been no Liberal association for over five years. However, at the 1880 election ward captains and house to house canvassing indicated that things were improving there, too.

In Monaghan, of course, there was great excitement and celebration. The Catholic and Protestant Liberals had shown that they were willing and able to unite to defeat the Tories. A letter from a Monaghan elector pointed out that it had not been purely the Presbyterians who had voted Liberal, but that many Methodists and Episcopalians had done likewise. There is also some evidence to indicate that numbers of Orangemen in Monaghan and Armagh went against their

²⁸⁰ It was recognised in any case, that the Liberal government would pass a measure of electoral reform which would increase the electorate and disfranchise small boroughs like Carrickfergus and Newry.

²⁸¹ Northern Whig, 23 April, 1880, p 6.

traditional voting patterns and voted in favour of the Liberal candidates,²⁸² but this seems unlikely.

The size of the Liberal victory suggests that a large number of Presbyterian Liberals voted for Givan and Findlater. However, as the Catholics had a clear majority upon the electoral register it could be regarded as academic the question of how many non-Catholics voted against Leslie and Shirley. There was an 87% poll. This was slightly higher than usual, but not astonishingly so. The Tories were aided by the fact that they had the endorsement of all the major landlords. Madden and Barret-Lennard each endorsed the Tory candidates. Rossmore openly canvassed for them. Dartrey, the other major non-Tory landowner, remained neutral. Thus for the first time in the county's history was the landowning class united in favour of the Tory candidates. And this meant that all those who saw their interests as linked with those of the landlords, notably the Episcopalians and the Orangemen, voted solidly for Leslie and Shirley. The Liberals, for their part, had the united voting strength of the Presbyterian Liberals and the Catholics of the constituency. For the first time since 1865 the clergy had openly supported the Liberal candidate. It can thus be assumed that the entire voting strength of the Catholics of Monaghan was thrown behind Givan and Findlater. Because Monaghan was a two seat constituency there is no way of accurately recording the number of voters who went to the poll. Each voter had two votes, but they could use only one of them, or vote across party lines - one for a Conservative and one for a Liberal. However, if we total the number of votes cast and divide by two, the figure arrived at should be very close to the total number of voters who went to the polls. The total electorate was 5,495. A total of 9,576 votes was cast for the four candidates and this gives a maximum number of voters who came to the polls of 4,788. If we assume that the Catholics had a simple majority of 300 voters on the lists, and that similar percentages of the two religions voted then this means that 2,544 Catholics and 2,244 Protestants voted at the election. Givan, as the major vote catcher on the Liberal ticket must have received the maximum cross-sectarian

282 Ibid, a series of letters regarding the attitude of Conservative Presbyterian flocks towards their Liberal clerics under the title, "Orangeism alias Toryism alias Ruffianism - the Late Election," appeared in the paper during this period and they make this claim. See, for example, 20 April, 1880, and 22 April, 1880.

votes. His total of 2,818 is 274 votes above the total possible Catholic vote. This suggests that Givan received 274 Protestant (presumably Presbyterian) votes. Findlater's total of 2,545 is only one vote more than our hypothetical Catholic voting total. If we also assume that the Conservative candidates received only Protestant votes then that total of 2,244 more than accounts for their recorded votes. But having already hypothesised that 274 Protestants voted for Givan, then their votes were lost to the two Protestant candidates. If Leslie's and Shirley's votes are totalled and subtracted from the total Protestant vote (each voter having two votes) you are left with $4,488 - (2,117 + 2,099) = 272$ votes. As this figure is close to our original hypothesis that Givan received 274 Protestant votes, we may, with some confidence, suggest that there were around 270 Presbyterian Liberals in Monaghan.

The writing was already on the wall for the Liberal party in Ireland but it was as yet not recognised. Where once the southern provinces returned large numbers of Liberals, they now returned but a handful. At the election, Ireland returned 63 Home Rulers, 25 Conservatives and 15 Liberals. However, the Liberal press continually tended to confound Home Rule and Liberal votes. Tables of voting patterns were drawn up which tabulated both votes in the one column. The Liberals in Ireland had not woken up to the fact that the old anti-Tory alliance was all but destroyed. And results like that in Monaghan strengthened the belief of the Irish Liberals that they were gaining ground. The reality was that after being the weaker party in Ulster for so long, Gladstone's reformist measures were gradually bearing fruit. As the London Times had stated before the election, the Orangemen might be strong Protestants, but they were also interested in their own well-being. Carrying this to its logical conclusion, the Ulster Tories would not always be able to depend upon the unswerving loyalty of the Protestants of the province. They had finally met the Tory challenge by bringing home to the Protestants of the northern province that Liberal governments ameliorated the social conditions of the industrial workers and the tenant farmers.

Where the Liberals came to grief, was that they did not fully recognise the challenge posed to their position by the Nationalist party. In the three southern provinces the Home Rulers (often erstwhile Liberals) were virtually invincible. For the Liberals to

hold any hope of success they required Catholic support. It was the Catholic vote in the vast majority of cases which tipped the scales towards the Liberals. The inherent difficulty has been summed up by one scholar when he recognised that,

the Liberals' rise was so artificial because it depended not on the formation of class alliances between independent established powerful political forces in urban and rural areas, but because it was based simply on the formation of alliances between disparate groups of pre-existing rural opponents of Conservatism. 283

Where Monaghan tended to cloud the issue was that with the restricted electoral register and the demographic breakdown of the county, both contributing to the electoral results in the constituency, the Presbyterian Liberals occupied the important balance of power role. Thus each side courted their votes, and each side argued for their support on the grounds of a united front defeating the opposition. The Conservative appealed to Protestant solidarity in the face of Catholic challenges, whilst the Catholics urged their Liberal, Presbyterian independent tenant farmers to support an anti-Tory candidate - invariably a member of the Liberal party.

In other words, the manner in which the Presbyterian tenant farmers voted was dependent upon whether their antipathy towards the landlord was greater than their dislike of Roman Catholicism. If they were anti-Catholic enough to support the Tories, it was indicative of the fact that, although opposed to landlordism, they did not trust the Catholics enough to ally with them to return a Liberal candidate. To counteract this trend Bishop Donnelly favoured putting forward Presbyterian Liberal candidates. In this way, the floating Presbyterian tenant farmer vote could be enticed to support Liberals who would in any case, be receiving the backing of the Catholics of the county.

The question of whether or not the committed Presbyterian Liberals recognised this fact is difficult to answer. In each constituency, of course, there were local Liberal party activists who were members of the Presbyterian congregation. It was to them that the party looked to entice Presbyterians to support their candidates. In Monaghan, James B Ross, W Moffat Clow, Richard Blakeley, H Gill Patterson and others formed the Presbyterian wing of the party. The Catholic wing was fronted by a number of local men, Gartlan and McCaul

283 P J Gibbon, The Origins of Ulster Unionism, unpublished Ph D (Manchester, 1972), p 308.

of Carrickmacross, Donnelly of Clones, Meighan of Monaghan and many small time politicians in the rural districts. However, unlike the Presbyterian Liberals, the Catholic Liberals also had a clerical dimension. If the candidate selected by the Liberals was 'of the right stamp' then he could expect the blessing of the Catholic Bishop of Clogher, and consequently (and more significantly) the material support of the Catholic clergy. As Pringle and Madden both discovered without the visible aid of the priests an anti-Tory candidate was doomed to fail. The contest of 1880 which was such a resounding victory for the Liberals was the only one during the period under discussion when the game went according to plan and the Presbyterian Liberals and the Catholics united to defeat the Conservative nominees.

Apart from the change in the nature of parliamentary representation in Monaghan, the general election had resulted in a new government at Westminster. In Ireland, however, the situation was unaltered. Famine was still present, although the threat was receding. The Shirley family, for example, was very active in raising charity for the tenants. On 19 February, Mrs W W Shirley wrote to the agent in Farney,

I know you will not let any of our people be starving & not let me know & get them meal at once & I want to get an appeal from myself printed & sent round to many here in England who would, I hope, help me. Can you help with a few startling facts to rouse their charity here.

284

And throughout the first half of 1880 there was considerable support for the destitute tenants from the Shirley family.²⁸⁵ Over in south Dartrey Madden was also aiding his tenantry with firewood and other necessities. In Clones seed potatoes and oats were given out to the poor from the Poor House. However, Madden noted in his diary that the relief being given under the recently passed relief act was at least one month too late - 'an instance of Irish mismanagement.'²⁸⁶

284 D 3531/C/4/1, W W Shirley to J J Gibbings, 16 March, 1880.

285 See Ibid, for correspondence on relief of poverty.

286 Madden's Diary, 20 April, 1880.

After the election the Shirley family took immediate steps to terminate the various benefits which they had afforded their tenants voluntarily. The practice of offering Shirley tenants cheap lime from the estate lime kilns was stopped²⁸⁷ and the wages paid to the workers at the kilns was lowered to the same level as that paid on the Bath estate.²⁸⁸ Shirley summed up his feelings in a letter to his agent in April, 1880, shortly after the election:

I hope from what you say that the Tenants were feeling their disgraceful & ungrateful conduct & consequent punishment, as to speaking the truth. It is a virtue virtually unknown in Ireland! Mr Twibill has ascertained that no more than 100 plumped for my son in the whole of Farney.

. . . The only connexion now left me in Farney with my Tenants is the Receipt of Rents. I cannot pretend to take any further interest in such a set of ungrateful humbugs!

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And so the wrath of a landlord scorned, continued. On 15 July he wrote to Gibbings that,

. . . having lost all confidence in them, I now believe that any abatement will be looked upon by the tenants as weakness, & as gratitude is a virtue unknown (so to speak) in Ireland the only effect will be that I shall be laughed at, and looked upon as a fool.

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This attitude would not be conducive to good landlord/tenant relations. But as the year continued and the harvest of 1880 promised to be a reasonable one, the condition of the mass of the tenantry in Monaghan improved. On 4 August Shirley could write to his agent that he was pleased that such a large amount of the rent due had been collected.²⁹¹ However, in the neighbouring county of Leitrim the Land League agitation had taken a firm grip. Madden recorded that he was receiving no rental from his Leitrim property.²⁹² And at the end of the year he noted in his diary that he had 'not received one shilling from any Leitrim Estate & only about half from my Monaghan & Fermanagh Estates.'²⁹³

287 D 3531/C/4/1, E P Shirley to Gibbings, 19 April, 1880.

288 Ibid, Shirley to Gibbings, 3 May 1880.

289 Ibid, Shirley to Gibbings, 24 April, 1880.

290 Ibid, Shirley to Gibbings, 15 July, 1880.

291 Ibid, Shirley to Gibbings, 4 August, 1880.

292 Madden's Diary, 11 October, 1880.

293 Ibid, 31 December, 1880.

The difference between the position in Leitrim and that of Monaghan or Fermanagh was the extent to which the Land League was organised in the area. In Leitrim the League was very active but in Monaghan it was a late arrival. In December of 1880 John Dillon held a meeting at Scotstown to organise a branch of the Land League in the county.²⁹⁴ The 'land campaign in the north' had been opened by Parnell, Dillon, O'Kelly and Jeremiah Jordan at Beleek, on 9 November.²⁹⁵ The town of Scotstown was probably chosen partly because it was an old Ribbon and Fenian centre and partly because it was there that a large land meeting in 1878 had called for peasant proprietorship.²⁹⁶

Dillon's effort was only the start, but it had the important effect of inducing the clergy to join. This meant that when the Land League was properly established in January, 1881, there was no opposition from the Catholic clergy. On 22 November, a monster land meeting had been organised in Monaghan town by the Liberals and the Tenant Defence Association. People had come in to the county town from every parish in the county accompanied by their parish priest. The meeting was chaired by Ancketell and Wall and the two MPs, Givan and Findlater, were present, accompanied by Litton and Richardson. Dickson and his father, 'Old Dickson' attended. Canon Smollen, the Liberal party supporter in Clones made a fine speech. The meeting was attended by Catholics, Protestants and Presbyterians.²⁹⁷ This gathering was clearly an attempt to discourage the spread of the Land League into Monaghan. If the Liberals could maintain their position in the county through agitation for land reform, they could stave off the inevitable challenge from the Parnellites.

The Liberals followed their successful meeting in Monaghan town by another in Carrickmacross, on 2 December. Once again, Givan and Findlater were present, as were the prominent Liberals of the county. During the meeting, H Gill Patterson made a speech as to the attempts made by the landlords to persuade the Orangemen to support them against the Land League. He believed that, 'there were very few landlords in

²⁹⁴ Livingston, Monaghan Story, p 336, incorrectly claims that the meeting was held in the summer.

²⁹⁵ T W Moody, Davitt & Irish Revolution, 1848-1882, (Oxford, 1981), p 424.

²⁹⁶ Livingston, Monaghan Story.

²⁹⁷ Donnelly's Diary, 22 November, 1880.

Ireland that would not buy Orange ribbons for distribution in one shop, and Green ones in another.'²⁹⁸

No doubt it was as a direct result of these Liberal land reform meetings that the Land League decided that it was time to organise in Monaghan. One week after the Liberal meeting in Carrickmacross, on 9 December, John Dillon spoke at the inaugural Land League meeting in Scotstown. The meeting attracted a large crowd, and, it must be said, an almost exclusively Catholic crowd. The meetings in Monaghan were part of a recruitment drive which was being conducted in south Ulster at this time. In Fermanagh and Tyrone, Jeremiah Jordan was active in organising branches and at least in this area, there was a limited Protestant response.²⁹⁹ In Monaghan, however, the Land League was seen as a Catholic organisation in a way in which the Defence Association had not been.³⁰⁰ An attempt was made to organise an opposition meeting but there was not enough time and the instigators, Lords Rossmore and Mandeville had to admit defeat.

The Scotstown meeting was only a beginning and Land League branches were quickly formed in Annyalla, the Aughnamullans, Clontibret, Tydavnet, Corcaghan, Aghabog, Threemilehouse, Trough and other districts of the county.³⁰¹ In an attempt to step up the recruitment a large meeting was organised for Carrickmacross on 6 January, 1881. Among those who attended were many prominent members of the Farney Defence Association, including Keenan, and the two Protestant members, Samuel Eakin and Henry Overend.³⁰² Over 30,000 people were present. A letter was read from John Givan stating that he would be unable to attend the meeting due to another engagement. His Liberal colleague, William Findlater, however, wrote to the effect

298 D 3531/B/3, cutting from Freeman's Journal, 3 December, 1880.

299 See D 627/428/6, Rev D C Abbott, Fivemiletown to Hugh de Fellenburg Montgomery, 8 December, 1880, and Maddeh's Diary, 7 December, 1880.

300 The opposition of the Presbyterian Liberals to the League underlined this fact. At the Grand Lodge meeting in June, 1881, it was agreed that warrants No 1588, held by Robert Breen, Magheraboy District, and No 2024, held by Francis Little, Tempo District, be cancelled because members had violated their Orange obligations by joining the Land League; see, Report Grand Orange Lodge, Belfast, 1 June, 1881, p 9.

301 D 3531/B/3, undated report from newspaper.

302 Ibid.

not only that he could not attend, but that he disagreed with the meeting, as he believed that it would weaken the position of the MPs in putting the tenants' case.³⁰³ This was a significant statement as it marks the point of divergence between the popular land movement in Monaghan as it was now expressed by the Land League, and the Liberal MPs who had been elected less than one year previously in a great movement to achieve a similar objective.

The advent of the Land League was seen as a particularly significant action by the Protestants and landlords of the county. The Northern Standard in an editorial in mid-January stated that if the priests had not encouraged the League to hold meetings in the county then they would not have dared.³⁰⁴ However, it seems likely that the Orangemen were overestimating the influence of the Catholic clergy in controlling the activities of their flock. For example, in December, 1880 Donnelly wrote to Hugh de Fellenburgh Montgomery that he

. . . would prefer this diocese & province should remain apart from the Land League and act as a collateral power. I am standing, myself aloof from the League, allowing, however, others to take their own course. I would probably fail in any open effort to keep out the League, and I don't see my way with such absolute clearness, as would call for decided action. 'Tis hard to blame the tenant farmers for joining the League. They have many and heavy grievances and the League is the only organisation which offers to give them substantial protection. I could say much more if I had an opportunity of speaking with you. All the utterances of Conservative landlords up to this, on the tenant right side, are the merest bunkum, conveying nothing tangible or definite. They simply wish by delusive generalities to tide over the prices and maintain their poor serfs still in bondage and poverty.

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This letter, written to one of the most liberal of the landlords in south Ulster, indicates the difficulties which were faced by a bishop when the Land League decided to spread into his diocese. There was no doubt but that he was the leader of his people and that his opinion held considerable weight in the area. However, Donnelly recognised that he could only lead his people in the direction in which they wished to go over a matter as important as the land. If he had banned the League then he was equally open to criticism because

303 Ibid.

304 Northern Standard, 15 January, 1880, p 3.

305 D 627/297E, Donnelly to Montgomery, 28 December, 1880.

not least by some of his younger curates. If he went publically in favour of the League then he was equally open to criticism because as a prominent member of a basically conservative institution he could not be encouraging social revolution. So Donnelly took the only sensible course open to him, he remained neutral in the face of Land League activity.

The landlords, of course, were not inactive. In south Ulster, especially Fermanagh and Tyrone there had been counter-demonstrations organised to oppose Land League meetings in those areas where the Protestants were numerous. The Monaghan landlords had attempted to oppose Dillon's meeting in Scotstown but the organisation was poor. To perfect the method of opposition, a meeting of the landlords had been held in Monaghan town on 16 December, 1880, as part of an island-wide organisation. At this meeting, promoted principally by Major Jesse Lloyd, the Rossmore agent, the County Monaghan Property Defence Association was formed. The object was to bind that class and its supporters together for mutual protection. There can be little doubt but that the Monaghan PDA was formed after the obvious success of the expedition to save Captain Boycott's crops.

The major weapon of the Land League was one of total ostracism. If anyone was seen to transgress the rules of the League he was shunned entirely. The policy had been advocated by Parnell at a meeting at Ennis on 19 September, 1880. He had advocated that if a land grabber was encountered,

. . . you must show him on the roadside when you meet him, you must show him in the streets of the town, you must show him at the shop counter, you must show him at the fair and in the market-place, and even in the house of worship, by leaving him severely alone, by putting him in a moral Coventry, by isolating from his kind as if he was a leper of old - you must show him your detestation of the crime he has committed.

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Within a week the theory was put into practice. This most celebrated victim was Captain Charles S Boycott, from whom the practice takes its name.³⁰⁷ Boycott was the land agent for the Earl of Erne at

306 This famous speech is quoted in most Irish history books; see, for example, Palmer, Irish Land League Crisis, pps 195-196.

307 It is often wrongfully claimed that the first victim was Canon Burke and that it was against him that the Irishtown meeting was called. This was not the case as has been recently indicated by Professor Moody; see, Davitt and Irish Revolution, pps 292-295.

Lough Mask, county Mayo. As a result of the agricultural recession, Erne instructed Boycott to offer the tenants an abatement of 10% but this they refused. After further discussion with his aged employer the offer was raised to 20%. This was also refused and Boycott commenced ejectment proceedings. The process server, however, was chased back to Lough Mask. A few days later the Ballinrobe Land League under the leadership of Father O'Malley, the parish priest, ordered all Boycott's staff to leave his employment. The boycott had begun in earnest.

Boycott wrote a number of letters to the Times of London explaining his plight and there was considerable sympathy with his position. In Ulster also, the Protestant population tended to identify with this isolated Protestant who was being abused by a priest and his parishioners in county Mayo. With the landlords under threat and the Protestants of the north of Ireland generally sympathetic to Boycott's plight, it was obvious that the Orange institution would become involved. At their meeting in December, 1880, resolutions had been passed that Orangemen would be breaking their oath and obligation if they joined the Land League.³⁰⁸ Further, it was decided to form an Orange Emergency Committee to defend the rights of property against the activities of the agrarian agitators.

Monaghan was particularly active in the anti-boycott campaign. Initially Colonel Lloyd had considered organising an expedition from the county to aid the Captain. However, this plan fell through and eventually a body of 57 Orange labourers, 32 from Monaghan and 25 from Cavan made the journey.³⁰⁹ They were accompanied by a large number of troops. Apart from constant jeering from the locals once they arrived in county Mayo, they met with no opposition. The biggest drawback was the inclement weather, with torrential rain falling all the time. The expedition was at Lough Mask. This was seen as an instance of Divine retribution by the local inhabitants. Be that as

³⁰⁸ Report Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, Dublin 1-2 December, 1880, pps 26-51.

³⁰⁹ On the boycott expedition, see, Davitt, Fall of Feudalism, pps 274-279; Palmer, Irish Land League Crisis, Ch X; also Joyce Marlow's account, Captain Boycott and the Irish (London 1973). The Orange Emergency Committee has been almost entirely overlooked, and requires research. It was a serious challenge to the League; see, Moody, Davitt & Irish Revolution, p 434.

it may, the crops were saved and the Orange labourers were able to return to Ulster, where they were regarded as heroes by the Orange population. They had harvested the crops at a ridiculous cost and had given the Land League more publicity than it could have even imagined.³¹⁰ However, much as the publicity aided the Land League, the successful completion of the task also spurred the Orangemen in Ulster on to further actions. And the activity of the Emergency Committee was one of the only positive forms of opposition encountered by the League.³¹¹

Back in Monaghan the Land League was still organising. And in Fermanagh there was a fear that the Protestants would become involved. In an effort to discountenance this in the Farney area, the Rev R Galbraith of Carrickmacross Church of Ireland held a meeting in which he read his parishioners a letter which he had sent to the leaders of the League objecting to the principles of the organisation. According to the report, he received the unanimous backing of the meeting.³¹²

Thenceforward, wherever there was a forced sale of stock by a landlord of a tenant's stock to make up rent arrears, the Orange Emergency Committee attended the sale and ensured that he received a fair price. But apart from the economic opposition to the boycott, the Orangemen were able to organise counter-demonstrations wherever the Land League had arranged to meet. Already there had been a 'Tenant Right anti-Land League Orange Meeting' held in Monaghan town in December.³¹³ And in mid-January a Land League meeting arranged for Rockcorry in a Protestant district of south Dartrey was counter-acted by an Orange counterdemonstration. So as to avoid difficulties, both meetings were banned.³¹⁴ This was to be the beginning of a pattern which would reach its height in 1883 with the Orange opposition to the 'Invasion of Ulster.'

While Ireland was experiencing the Land War, its representatives were active at Westminster. The advent of Gladstone's government had

³¹⁰ Bew, Land and the National Question in Ireland, p 133, also O'Brien, Parnell and His Party, p 55.

³¹¹ One of the major agents for the Committee was Athol J Dudgeon, a Monaghan Orangeman and land agent.

³¹² D 3531/B/5, newspaper cutting, 3 January, 1881.

³¹³ D627/428/7, Rev D C Abbott to Montgomery, 18 December, 1880.

³¹⁴ Northern Standard, 22 January, 1881, p 4.

ushered in for a time, a moderate and conciliatory tone in parliament. The Liberal majority was of such proportions as to make government defeat almost impossible. In addition, Ireland looked upon Gladstone as a man who had made a determined effort to ameliorate the position of the tenants. Thus the Irish members took a less aggressive stance than they had during Beaconsfield's administration. The Queen's Speech had not included any reference to Ireland, but in June the government introduced the Compensation for Disturbance Bill.³¹⁵ It was generally supported by the Irish members, but was thrown out by the House of Lords. As a result the Parnellites decided to obstruct the constabulary estimates. On 9 September, parliament had gone into recess.

Most of the activity of the year had taken place outside parliament with the Land War well under way. In an attempt to exert pressure upon the MPs it was decided to prosecute Parnell, and four of his associates for conspiracy to stop the payment of rent. It was impossible to get a conviction and if anything, the government's attempt only strengthened Parnell's hand at home.³¹⁶ Thus, when parliament reopened in January, 1881, even the promise of a Land Bill could not pacify the Parnellites in the face of Forster's promised coercion measures. They prolonged the debate on the Queen's Speech for 11 nights. The conflict intensified when Forster's first coercion bill was introduced. During this debate it was announced that Davitt had been arrested. Uproar ensued and Parnell and 35 other Irish members were ejected from the House.³¹⁷ In March, a second coercion measure was introduced and Parnell was there to fight it. The critical choice was made after the suspension of the 36 Parnellites. Parnell could either have taken the party out of Westminster to a sort of Dail Eireann, or remain a constitutionalist. He chose the latter course. It was important in any case, to give Gladstone an opportunity to pass the measure of land reform he had promised.

³¹⁵ For a succinct discussion of the parliamentary actions of the Parnellites during the period from Gladstone's victory to the Kilmainham Treaty, see, O'Brien, Parnell and His Party, Ch II.

³¹⁶ A celebratory march was held in Monaghan. See, Northern Standard, 29 January, 1881, p 3.

³¹⁷ O'Brien, Parnell and His Party, p 59, et seq, carries a discussion of Parnell's options and his subsequent strategy.

The basic principles which the 1881 act legalised were the Ulster Custom, or the 'Three Fs.' The significance of this was that it recognised for the first time the dual ownership of land. Compensation for disturbance, and for improvements was included in the measure as well as the constituting of an Irish Land Commission.³¹⁸ The Commission could decide a fair rent as well as advance money to tenants to buy out their holdings. Its major drawback was that the leaseholders were excluded from the workings of the act, and the 130,000 tenants who were behind in their rent payments. Parnell persuaded his followers to improve the bill as much as possible, and they tabled many amendments. The Parnellites were aided in their efforts to improve the bill by John Givan.³¹⁹

However, the 1881 Land Act, for all its faults, sounded the death-knell for the Land League as it was then constituted. Parnell may have recognised this fact when he courted imprisonment during the autumn of 1881. Fortunately the government responded emphatically and incarcerated him on 13 October.³²⁰ When he was dispatched to jail he stated that with him out of the way Ireland would have to turn to 'Captain Moonlight,' or, in other words, back to the Ribbon system. Once inside, Parnell issued the 'No Rent Manifesto,' and the conflict in Ireland intensified. The day following Parnell's issuance of the No Rent Manifesto, Archbishop Croke issued a condemnatory manifesto of his own, which was followed by a total ban on the Land League by Forster.³²¹ The hierarchy was in a very difficult position. In the west especially, many young curates were becoming involved, and MacEvilly, MacHale's successor in Tuam had to deal with the government to get three young priests out of jail for inflammatory language.³²² The 'No Rent Manifesto' was a failure, but the weight of applications to the Land Commission overwhelmed the machinery as Parnell had predicted. Anna Parnell and the Ladies'

318 Kolbert and O'Brien, Land Reform in Ireland, pps 35-37.

319 Northern Standard, 5 February, 1881, pps 2-3.

320 To celebrate, the Clones Orangemen burned Parnell in effigy on 14 October, 1881. See, Madden's Diary, 14 October, 1881.

321 For a critical view of these events, see Healy, Letters and Leaders of my Day, pps 154-157.

322 Larkin, Roman Catholic Church and the Modern Irish State, p 132.

Land League kept the agitation going until Parnell and his associates were released from jail on 2 May, 1882. Parnell agreed to use his influence to decrease the level of violence in Ireland, to co-operate with the Liberals and to accept an amended Land Act as a final solution to the Land question. The government promised to release all of the conspirators, to admit leaseholders to the benefits of the Act, to deal with the question of arrears, and, albeit only by implication, to remove the coercion measures. Forster, in disgust, resigned immediately.

Parnell had achieved a memorable victory, even if the advanced wing of the agrarian movement was unhappy. He had, by direct and indirect action (being imprisoned) persuaded Gladstone to bring a measure which he believed to be the major domestic question in Ireland. He was free once more and had the promise of co-operation from the British government. All his hopes, however, appeared to be dashed when a malevolent, madcap crew murdered the new Chief Secretary for Ireland, Lord Frederick Cavendish, and a senior civil servant, T H Burke in the Phoenix Park.³²³ The assassinations appeared to make a mockery of the Kilmainham Pact and to vindicate the policies of W E Forster, resulting in Parnell offering to resign. With the death of Cavendish and Burke ended the first phase of Parnell's leadership of the Home Rule Party.

In Monaghan the Catholics were so upset at the murders that they organised a protest meeting in the Christian Brothers' School in the town. The chair was occupied by Bishop Donnelly. He stated that there had never been a deed perpetrated which could afford a parallel. And he continued,

. . . it conflicts with all our national feelings; and in its bearing on our prospects - our social and political prospects - it is dismal indeed. Our blackest enemy could never have devised anything half so hurtful to us . . .

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Canon Hoey spoke in favour of the resolutions of sympathy.

³²³ O'Donnell, tells the story of Parnell's reaction to the murders in History of the Irish Parliamentary Party, Vol II, pps 121-123.

³²⁴ Northern Standard, 13 May, 1882, p 3.

Parnell had managed to bring the land question to a successful if only temporary, conclusion. It meant that the land agitation could take a back seat for a period as could the agrarian radicals such as Davitt who had been prominent in the movement. Thus Parnell reformed the popular movement but with subtle differences. With Land League suppressed, and Egan, Brennan and other officials out of the country, Parnell was left with a weakened opposition in Ireland. Davitt was moving towards a position of land nationalisation which was not popular with the peasants.³²⁵ This removed the major obstacle to Parnell's placing of the Land League movement on a more suitable footing vis-a-vis the parliamentary party. Thus Parnell reformed the movement under the name of the Irish National Land League. He was in complete control and Home Rule became the major plank on its platform. It had become, in fact, a major adjunct of the party,³²⁶ and acted as 'the smooth-running national election machinery.'

The Phoenix Park murders led the government to introduce a major coercion measure. They also, by bringing down the fierce opposition of English members upon Parnell, enticed the Home Rulers to close ranks. This, in turn, aided Parnell in his attempt to renew the party. And although there were virtually no more important measures brought before the House until 1884, Parnell had a party behind him which was backed up by an island wide organisation.

Back in Ireland the land conflict continued; E P Shirley instructed his agent to sack any workman who was a member of the Land League.³²⁷ Madden was engaged in serving ejectment processes in Leitrim. This was postponed for a short time in June, 1881, as the Sheriff arrested 10 Leitrim Land Leaguers and the troops were required in Ballinamore.³²⁸ By now Madden was owed around £4,000 in back rent from his Leitrim property alone. He thus decided upon a policy of mass eviction.

325 Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine, pps 270-271.

326 O'Brien, Parnell and his Party, pps 126-133.

327 D 3531/C/4/1, E P Shirley to Gibbings, 24 January, 1881.

328 Madden's Diary, 3 June, 1881.

The Land League continued to spread. In Monaghan town a branch was formed in Goudy's public house in the Shambles.³²⁹ Sectarian tension remained close to the surface. At the January Petty Sessions court a Mrs Gillanders whose son had been on the Boycott expedition brought a summons against Mrs Ellen Hughes for constant harassment and assault.³³⁰ On 2 July, it was reported that the annual parade to hoist the orange flags on the parish church had been attacked and that those Orangemen who had been on the expedition were singled out.³³¹

But the friction was not entirely sectarian. The fear that some of the Presbyterians might join the Land League led Shirley to threaten to stop his annual contribution to their minister's stipend.³³² Whilst in the same area the Catholic landlord, Plunkett Kenny of Inniskeen applied to the Orange Emergency Committee for aid to harvest his crops as he was being boycotted.³³³ He had been forced to sell seven of his farms because tenants refused to pay the rent.³³⁴ The Land League forbade any to bid at the sale and Athol Dudgeon bought the farms for the Committee. Kenny was then boycotted. Others being boycotted at this time were Miss Rose, the landlord of Tydavnet and H Gill Patterson, the prominent Presbyterian Liberal.

In addition to the boycott the Land League was attempting to persuade the landlords to instigate another abatement of rent. In March the Marquis of Bath's tenants were offered an abatement of four shillings in the pound under £10 and three shillings over that sum.³³⁵ In addition, Mr Brownlow, Mr Porter and Mr Lewis all gave reductions in rent. The negotiations continued throughout the year and at the beginning of 1882 the League again demanded an abatement.³³⁶ At the

329 Northern Standard, 22 January, 1881, p 3.

330 Ibid, 29 January, 1881, p 3.

331 Ibid, 2 July, 1881, p 3.

332 D 3531/C/4/1, E P Shirley to Gibbings, 24 January, 1881.

333 Northern Standard, 30 July, 1881, p 3; 6 August, 1881, p 3.

334 Ibid, 4 June, 1881, p 3.

335 D 3531/B/3, undated newspaper report.

336 Livingstone, Monaghan Story, p 340.

end of 1882 there was a general flurry of correspondence between Shirley, his agent and the leaders of the League as the latter wished to agree a sum to be submitted to the commissioners appointed under the 1882 Arrears Act which had been a part of the Kilmainham Treaty.³³⁷

Throughout this period, 1880-1882, the Presbyterian Liberals and the Catholic Nationalists who had jointly made up the anti-Tory alliance of 1880 were moving farther apart. The boycotting of Patterson was but an illuminating example. It had been confidently predicted in mid 1881 that Givan would be appointed an Assistant Commissioner under the Land Law (Ireland) Act.³³⁸ Speculation had even gone so far as to see the Northern Standard publish an editorial to the effect that a 'good Protestant, and one worthy of the support of all moderate men' would be coming forward to address them.³³⁹ The rumours proved ill-founded, but almost a year later the same journal reported that the People's Advocate had recently indicated that Givan would not be a welcome candidate at the next election. The Standard stated that in an ensuing battle the Radicals would be advocating universal suffrage which was a measure the Protestants would never support.

The Protestant voters of the county . . . are shrewd and intelligent enough not to vote for their own extinction. They do not want Home Rule and Universal Suffrage. They want Protestant interests protected, the welfare of the county attended to, law and order upheld and sedition put down. If they stand together they can defy the united efforts of the Land Leaguers and the Fenians to wrest the representation of the county from them.

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The editorial writer was refusing to realise that the implementation of such measures as universal suffrage would occur irrespective of who won the Monaghan seat. However, he was of the opinion that the Monaghan seats could be regained if the Protestants of the county

³³⁷ D 3531/B/3, Phelan to H H Shirley, 5 October, 1882; Phelan to Gibbings, 3 October, 1882; Gibbings to Phelan, 4 October, 1882; Phelan to Gibbings, 4 October, 1882; Trench to Phelan, 4 October, 1882.

³³⁸ Northern Standard, 27 August, 1881.

³³⁹ Ibid, 3 September, 1881, p 3.

³⁴⁰ Ibid, 17 June, 1882, p 3.

united behind the Conservatives. His belief that the contest might be soon, was incorrect. Parliament would continue for another three years, and there could be no real reason for thinking that Givan, or Findlater, for that matter, would resign.

CHAPTER VII

'To raise the banner in the remote north'

The Healy by-election, 1883

John Givan had asserted in 1880 that he would never use his election as MP for the county to further his legal career. These had continued throughout his term at Westminster. Once news of his acceptance of the post of Crown Solicitor for counties Kildare and Meath reached Westminster, John O'Connor Power reminded the House that in September, 1882 Givan had declared at a banquet in the county of Monaghan that,

. . . he would not accept any appointment from a Government who (sic) would not grant the entire of the amendments of the Land Act demanded by the tenantry of Ulster - (Irish cheers) - and if so, whether we are now to gather from the fact of the appointment that the Government are to bring in a bill embodying Mr Givan's views? (Laughter and Irish cheers).

1

Whereas Power was never known to be one who would miss an opportunity to embarrass any government at Westminster, he did underline the complete volte face of Monaghan's representative. As late as February, 1883, in fact, Givan had stated,

In order to fulfill this promise (to rid Monaghan of its Tory administration, especially the Grand Jury system), I must be at the digging of the grave in Westminster, and when the accursed system has been put down in that grave and a triumphant elective system of self government raised upon its ruins, I might begin to turn to the otium cum dignitate which the finished work of an active life requires and desires.

2

1 People's Advocate 16 June, p 3.

2 Ibid.

In the light of such public speeches it was a shock to the local Liberals when Givan made his announcement regarding his impending retirement. It seems clear that Givan did not see Monaghan initially as a lever to further his career, but events between April 1880 and June 1883 had seriously weakened the Liberal position in Ireland.

Monaghan was to be the twenty-first by-election fought in Ireland since the General Election of 1880. Of these 11 were uncontested. Of the other nine (not including Monaghan) three were in Ulster; Dungannon in June 1880, Tyrone in September 1881 and Derry county three months later. In each of these elections the Liberals were victorious. In Dungannon the successful petition by the Tories against Thomas A Dickson led to a new contest in which his son James defeated the same Conservative nominee Colonel Hon William Stuart Knox. The Derry by-election was called after Rt Hon Hugh Law, QC, was appointed Lord Chancellor for Ireland,³ and had to relinquish his seat. It was retained for the Liberals by Rt Hon Andrew Marshall Porter in a three-cornered fight with the Conservatives and the Home Rulers. The Tyrone contest was called after Edward Litton QC, was appointed Land Commissioner. Thomas Dickson returned to Westminster when he was elected to sit for county Tyrone. As with Derry, the Tyrone contest included a nominee from the Home Rulers, Rev Harold Rylett.⁴ The Conservative was the Stuart Knox who suffered three defeats at the hands of the Dickson family in the space of 18 months.

Ulster appeared to be fallow ground for the Liberals. And there was clearly a trend during Gladstone's second administration to repay his supporters in Ulster. This suggests that the Liberals believed that their position within the province was strong enough to ensure that the seats would not be retaken by the Conservatives. The story in the south was somewhat different. Only one seat, Mallow, could be taken as any sort of pointer as to political feeling in the other three

³ There had, in fact, been two Derry by-elections. In May 1880 Law had been appointed Attorney General for Ireland. He was unopposed, and this prospect may have played a part in Gladstone's willingness to further promote him 18 months later.

⁴ Rev Harold Rylett, from Tyrone. Recognised as the Land League organiser for Ulster. A Presbyterian minister, he eventually moved to Birmingham.

provinces. It had traditionally been a Liberal seat.⁵ In May 1880 a by-election was called and in a straight fight with the Home Rulers the Liberals received almost 80% of the votes cast. However, in January 1883 another by-election saw the Home Ruler William O'Brien receive 161 votes to John Naish the Liberal's 89. This dramatic reversal indicated just how susceptible the Liberals were to Catholic defections in Munster, Leinster and Connaght. Nevertheless, it seems certain that one of the reasons that Givan was offered the job of Crown Solicitor for the counties of Meath and Kildare was that the leaders of the party in England firmly believed that Ulster still remained true to the Liberal banner and that Monaghan could be retained.

As already noted,⁶ the Land War had been going on since 1879. The years 1882 and 1883 saw a diminution of activities mostly as a result of the Kilmainham Treaty, but from the point of view of Protestants living in a peripheral area, the activities of the Land League were not to be confounded with the tenant right movement in which they had played a prominent part. The impetus which had existed amongst the county's tenant farmers at the time of the 1880 General Election had been lost by 1883. There could be no alliance between Protestant and Catholic tenant farmers to defeat the Tories; that battle had been fought and won three years earlier. The Land War, more poignant in Monaghan because of the Boycott Expedition's Monaghan/Cavan foundation, had had a profound effect upon the constituency. Hence forward it was clear that there were Protestant/Loyalists on the one side and on the other stood the Catholic/Nationalists. Whether this was the desire of the politicians in either camp is debateable, but they did not live in such areas. The sectarianism of Ulster politics which at least had only been a latent factor was by now the foremost feature of life within politics in the province. Edward Saunderson had felt obliged by December 1880 to suggest to the County Grand Lodge of Fermanagh that it procure arms and distribute them

⁵ In the General Election of 1832 the veteran nationalist W J O'Neill Daunt won the seat as a Repealer. From then until 1874, with the exception of a Conservative victory at the 1859 General Election, it was in Liberal hands. In 1874 J G McCarthy defeated the Liberal by 20 votes and he held the seat until 1880 when the Liberals won it back in a straight fight with the Conservatives.

⁶ See above, Ch 6, pp 346-8.

to the Orangemen in the border areas.⁷ Whereas this may, to some extent, be put down to the machinations of a sectarian politician, the favourable response which his call received was indicative of the tenor of feeling within Protestant society in the border areas. Saunderson's⁸ views sum up this attitude. On 12 July, 1882, he stated,

The Land League, founded in the country by way of affording the tenants protection, felt that they could not accomplish the object without the Orangemen. When Parnell, Biggar and their crew, went to Parliament and said they represented Ireland, they knew well they never spoke a word in the name of the Irish Orangemen. Their great objective was to gain the Orange body. How did they attempt it? They came over to Ulster and told the Orangemen that their sole objective was to secure for the tenant farmers fair play and no favour; . . . (but) they knew what they said in Connaught and Cork; it was 'Ireland for the Irish,' and 'out with the English garrison.' Who were the English garrison? They were the Protestants of the North. 9

The following month Saunderson suggested that the Orangemen in the border area commence military drilling.

It was against this background that a number of prominent Ribbon type trials took place. In May 1883 the trials of the Invincibles, who had shown a fatal aversion to both Burke and Cavendish, took place in Dublin. The gaze of the domestic and national press then shifted to the Crossmaglen conspiracy. An almost forgotten episode in Irish history, it caused a major furore in Ireland when it broke. The Brotherhood of Saint Patrick had been founded by what must have been a vestige of the 'Ribbon system' in south Armagh. The principle conspirators were Michael Watters, the National School master in the village, Patrick Burns, an Irish-American who had lost his leg in the American Civil War, and Patrick Duffy who was a notorious old Ribbonman. They founded the

7 John Magee, 'The Monaghan Election of 1883 and the Invasion of Ulster,' in Clogher Record, Vol VIII, No 2, (1974), p 151, n 17.

8 Edward James Saunderson, 1837-1906. Born at Castle Saunderson, county Cavan, he spent his boyhood in Nice where he was educated privately by a Jesuit priest; returned to Ireland in 1858; Liberal MP for county Cavan, 1865-1874; opposed disestablishment; Colonel, militia battalion, Royal Irish Fusiliers; Conservative MP for North Armagh, 1885-1906. Became leader of the Ulster Unionists; was made Sheriff of Cavan in 1859 and Lord Lieutenant in 1900.

9 Reginald Lucas, Colonel Saunderson MP, (London, 1908), p 66.

association to get rid of a local landlord called Henry Gustavus Brooke and Robert John McGeough who was a land agent.¹⁰ It was also hoped that all advanced nationalists could be united under the Brotherhood's banner in an attempt to rid Ireland of English rule. When an inquiry was launched to investigate the group around 40 men fled from the Crossmaglen area. And during a period stretching from the inquiry to the hearing of the first cases at Belfast Assizes, upwards of 100 men in the south Armagh and north Monaghan area left their homes. It was estimated at the time that over 200 young men, principally farmers and labourers, left the area due to implication in the affair.¹¹ Justice Lawson at the end of his summing up of the case stated, "This unfortunate district of Crossmaglen . . . has always been a stain on the fair fame of the province of Ulster." And it resembled in this, other areas of Monaghan which had always been centres of advanced nationalist endeavour.

The Phoenix Park and Crossmaglen affairs were to augment the sectarian atmosphere in the Monaghan area prior to the by-election. On 5 June Davitt Healy and Quinn were released from Kilmainham jail and four days later, on June 9th, the last death sentence on a Phoenix Park conspirator was carried out.¹² In addition, there were a number of sensational cases in Liverpool of 'dynamitards.' It was on the same day, 9 June, that the Dublin Evening Mail carried the news that John Givan had been appointed to the lucrative position of Crown Solicitor for counties Meath and Kildare,

as a tangible recognition, we suppose, of the thick-and-thin support he has at all times given Mr Gladstone. The electors of Monaghan will . . . be called upon in a few days to elect his successor . . . Of course the Parnellites will make every exertion to inflict another defeat upon the Government, and repeat, if they can, the blow which was struck so heavily at Mallow. We confidently hope that the constitutional party will not allow this splendid opportunity to pass without straining every effort to carry the constituency. 13

10 Northern Standard, 24 March, 1883, p 3.

11 Ibid, 31 March, 1883.

12 London Times, 9 June, 1883.

13 Dublin Evening Mail, 9 June, 1883, p 2.

If an appointment was only to be expected after Givan's activities in the House of Commons, the actual post was something of a surprise. The editor of the Northern Standard stated, "Every man has his price, and we thought that Mr Givan's figure was far above what he has accepted."¹⁴ He continued that apart from his undoubted services to the Liberal party in Parliament, it must be remembered that no other man could have wrested the representation of the county from the Conservatives at the General Election, and that no man could have worked harder for Liberalism in Ulster than Givan had.

Givan's acceptance of the position meant that there would be a by-election in the county and it was essential for each of the contending parties, the Conservatives, the Liberals and the Home Rulers (by this period being termed Parnellites by both the unionist and nationalist press) to do well. Givan had gone to Monaghan on Friday, 8 June to inform his parliamentary committee of his impending retirement from Westminster so as to enable them to find a replacement.¹⁵

The Belfast Newsletter and the Dublin Evening Mail were the first journals to carry the news of Givan's impending departure and the Newsletter suggested that David Ross QC, a prominent Liberal in the county who had recently been appointed to a lucrative position in a Dublin law firm, would be the Liberal nominee. It also strongly advocated that Sir John Leslie contest the seat in the Conservative interest, and it had warmly supported his campaign three years earlier. The Newsletter also claimed that mention had been made of a 'nationalist' candidate coming forward. Commenting on Givan's decision to relinquish the honour of representing the county, the paper pointed out that, "he would have no chance of being returned as one of the representatives of the county" in the event of a dissolution of parliament.¹⁶ Similarly, the Dublin Evening Mail noted that the Parnellites would not forego the chance of taking a stride into Ulster and of further embarrassing

¹⁴ Northern Standard, 16 June, 1883, p 3.

¹⁵ Belfast Newsletter, 11 June, 1883, p 3.

¹⁶ Ibid.

Gladstone.¹⁷

This disaffection of the Liberal party in Ireland with the Parnellites and the Land Leaguers in Ulster as elsewhere on the island had become most pronounced. For example, Charles McMordie, an unofficial election agent for the Liberals in the south of the province, had played a prominent role in the Liberal victory in Monaghan in 1880. At a Land Commission case in Newtownards, county Down, McMordie refused to represent a Protestant tenant farmer called John McKee. Before Commissioner Hodder he stated,

I may say that this tenant told me he was a Land Leaguer, and I then decided not to have anything to do with him . . . I do not want to have any voluntary connection with the Invincibles or their friends . . . I decline to have anything to do with him or any man who tells me he is a member of the Land League. 18

This extreme Liberal reaction to the Parnellites and the Land League was partly a predictable stance taken towards political opponents. However, there was also the underlying resentment at the manner in which the land question had been abrogated by the nationalist movement. The nationalists in turn had rapidly relegated the land issue to be one whereby a rhetorical support for the demand for a national parliament could be given. This had been achieved with the foundation of the National League in October, 1882, when, to all intents and purposes, the agrarian agitation became a wing of the Parnellite movement.¹⁹

Parnell's only serious rival had been Michael Davitt, the father of the Land League, but his,

17 It has been asserted that Parnell's decision to run Healy in Monaghan was a complete surprise to the electors of Monaghan. See, for example, John Magee, 'The Monaghan Election of 1883,' where he states, "Then suddenly and unexpectedly a letter from Parnell appeared in the Belfast Morning News announcing the impending candidature of a Nationalist . . . his unexpected decision threw the Liberal party in confusion." pp 150-151.

18 It is significant that the People's Advocate, the nationalist newspaper for county Monaghan should carry this report; news from Newtownards was not often carried in the county's journals. See People's Advocate, 9 June, 1883, p 2.

19 The National League, unlike the Land League of Ireland did not take land reform as its principal demand, rather, it chose self-government. A council was devised which would be controlled by the parliamentary party, but it never met and an organising committee under Parnell's control was in charge of the movement.

desertion of peasant proprietorship for the apparently faddish objective of land nationalisation substantially reduced his popularity both in Ireland and in Irish-America. The result was to give Parnell the mantle of supreme realist whose leadership was the sine qua non of nationalist victory. 20

In other words, the land question of 1883 was completely different from that of 1880. There was no longer any reason for Protestant tenant farmers to support a Parnellite who also advocated land reform. Land reform was, as had been hoped at the time of the New Departure, now a stepping stone towards the final goal of a national parliament. This being so, Protestants, especially the tenant farmers, had to decide between ethnic and class interests. That is, they could continue to strive for greater autonomy upon their holdings and ignore the probable instituting of a national parliament. Or they could forego a thorough-going reform, accept Lord George-Hamilton's piecemeal effort, defeat their 'Civil and Religious Liberties' etc, and resume at a later date their quest for land reform. The Monaghan by-election of 1883 would be a clear pointer as to which choice the Protestant tenant farmers would make.

Givan telegraphed Joseph Meegan, Secretary of the Monaghan Liberal Association, to officially inform him of his decision to vacate the seat. In the course of the message he stated,

You and those who know me best have been aware that I suffered much pecuniary loss and great inconvenience by being in parliament and my friends in Monaghan and elsewhere are unanimous in the opinion that the appointment now offered to me ought to be accepted. 21

Givan claimed that it was purely to aid ailing finances that he accepted the government appointment, but if that was the case it is peculiar that he should be willing to accept one which was comparatively poorly paid. Givan must have recognised that he had little hope of retaining the Monaghan seat at the next General Election, and if he waited until then he would have to return to his solicitor's office in Aughnacloy. On the other hand, his finances, or comparative lack thereof,

20 Paul Bew, C S Parnell, (Dublin, 1980), p 62.

21 People's Advocate, 16 June, 1883, p 3.

had been a contributing factor in his great desire to have Sir William Tyrone Power to be his running-mate in 1880; and this had in turn helped Power to make the decision not to contest the seat lest he be burdened with a disproportionate amount of expenses.²²

Inevitably there was a considerable excitement in the county, and a number of people, prominent either locally or nationally, were linked with the seat. On 12 June the Dublin Evening Mail recorded John Munroe QC, the future Conservative candidate, with David Ross QC, and John McMahon vying for the Liberal nomination. There were no nationalists chosen but Charles MacArdle was considering coming forward as a Home Ruler. The Press Association, according to the same paper, saw Munroe, Charles Hemphill QC, and John Dillon as the prospective candidates.²³ The Belfast Newsletter claimed that the Conservatives were determined to put forward a Protestant tenant farmer - probably Munroe, and also tipped MacArdle.²⁴ The following day the Dublin Evening Mail carried a report that Healy was definitely to be the Nationalist candidate; whereas the Times of the same date again tipped Munroe, but it also mentioned a definite Parnellite candidacy.²⁶ By 14 June the Freeman's Journal had confirmed that Healy would resign his seat to contest Monaghan, and this story was carried by the Times on the following day.

The two Monaghan local papers were published on a Saturday, and they carried the county's hot favourites for the forthcoming competition. Both the Northern Standard and the People's Advocate agreed that James B Ross, David Ross QC and J Dempsey of Belfast were possible Liberals, with the Northern Standard also suggesting Charles Hemphill and the People's Advocate including McMahon.²⁷ With regard to the Nationalist hopefuls, both papers agreed that Healy and Dillon were the most likely,

22 See above, Ch VI, pp 275-7.

23 Dublin Evening Mail, 12 June, 1883, p 3.

24 Belfast Newsletter, 12 June, 1883, p 5.

25 Dublin Evening Mail, 13 June, 1883, p 3.

26 London Times, 13 June, 1883, p 12.

27 Discussion of the potential candidates was contained in Northern Standard and People's Advocate on 16 June, 1883. Munro and Healy were consistently tipped by all journals as possible candidates, whilst others were often only mentioned by one paper. Often political labels were uncertain; thus McMahon was described as both a Liberal and a Home Ruler, whereas Hemphill suffered the same fate.

with a slight chance of the nomination going to Charles MacArdle. It appeared as if half of Monaghan society wished to stand in the Conservative interest. The Northern Standard favoured Munro, Sir Samuel Wilson, Alderman Hazlett and a Mr Boyd QC. The People's Advocate, like the Belfast Newsletter noted that the Conservatives would be selecting a Protestant who would be favourable to the tenant farmers of the county. This was an obvious tactic after the last election when so many of the Presbyterian tenant farmers had voted Liberal.

Some of those suggested were not really potential candidates. On the Conservative side we can ignore George Knight and John Holmes. Knight was a Clones solicitor and a very prominent Orangeman; he was also one of the major loyalist powerbrokers in the county.²⁸ In his role as a solicitor he often represented Protestant interests in sectarian or land cases. Similarly, John Holmes was the proprietor of the Northern Standard and as such was a key figure in Conservative politics in the area. And whilst either Knight or Holmes would have been an acceptable choice to the tenant farmers, it is unlikely that they would have got the whole-hearted backing of the county families. Of the other prospective Conservative candidates, it would have been most unlikely that either Sir Samuel Wilson from Belfast or Alderman Hazlett would have risked a campaign in such a marginal seat as Monaghan. Sir John Leslie who had been defeated in 1880 might have got the nomination if he had wanted it, but it had already been decided that a candidate sympathetic to the tenant farmers would have the best chance of achieving victory. If this ruled out Leslie, it might also work against Lloyd. He was certainly very popular with the Orange tenant farmers, and had been one of the major organisers of the Boycott expedition and also the Orange Emergency Committee,²⁹ but as with Leslie he was a landlord. If the key to a constitutionalist victory was to be the Presbyterian Liberals then there

28 George Knight, from Corkimmons, outside Clones. The WM of LOL 586, he was District Secretary of Drum District, 1866-1868; County Grand Secretary of Monaghan, 1865-1875, and Deputy County Master, 1876-1890. A prominent solicitor in Clones, his family have been prominent in the Orange movement in Monaghan for over a century.

29 Work is still to be carried out on the men who broke the boycott, and the formation of the Orange Emergency Committee. There is, however, Joyce Marlow's Captain Boycott and the Irish, (London, 1973).

was little chance of one being achieved with Lloyd. Lloyd might best be described as unsound on certain key 'presbyterian' issues. He was not a supporter of the temperance movement, although there was never any suggestion of excessive drunkenness; a greater mark against him was that he owned racehorses which he raced at various courses in Ireland and abroad on Sundays.³⁰ This left only Boyd and Munro - both QCs. Little is known of Boyd, but Munro operated on the north-eastern circuit, had fought his first case in the county (instructed by Knight), and was well known in Monaghan. He was an ambitious but honourable man, sympathetic to the tenant farmers, from which class he himself had risen, and he could be relied upon to fight a vigorous contest.

The nationalists had a number of options. There were continuing strong rumours that Parnell would pull one of his leading young lieutenants out of another seat and place him before the electors. Dillon and Healy were the most obvious choices, and of these, Healy had certain qualifications over Dillon. He was one of the half dozen men who claimed to have been responsible for the key arrears clause in the 1881 Land Act. Healy was the man whose claim was the most widely accepted. But the major factor in his favour was that he had only been released from the Richmond Bridewell on 4 June, after serving four months of a six month sentence along with Davitt and James Quinn for making seditious speeches. The fact that G O Trevelyan had imprisoned Healy militated strongly in his favour, especially as incarceration had had a profound effect upon him. The People's Advocate described the scene,

Mr Davitt appeared in robust health, and not one whit the worse for his long confinement. The same remarks apply to Mr Quinn, but Mr Healy, MP, was decidedly paler and less strong in appearance than before his arrest.

31

Other nationalist nominees were mentioned. One of the most intriguing was Charles MacArdle from England. A member of the Liverpool City Council, he was a native of Castleblayney, and lived at Blayney

³⁰ This desecration of the Sabbath virtually ruled out Lloyd from taking an active part in Ulster politics. It was a point which the People's Advocate was quick to point out.

³¹ People's Advocate, 9 June, 1883, p 3.

Villa, Egremont.³² He was a prominent Home Ruler in the English setting. In this he was distinguished in the press from the Nationalists which possibly indicated that he was one of the more moderate Buttites. Apart from being mentioned in both the Northern Standard and the People's Advocate on 16 June, he had been noticed also in the Belfast Newsletter and the Dublin Evening Mail on 12 June. MacArdle was well thought of in the Castleblayney area and it was felt that he could attract a number of Presbyterian voters. His forthright support for the temperance movement would also have aided his campaign. The temperance issue was still being kept in the public gaze by the Irish Sunday Closing Bill at that time being considered at Westminster.³³

For the Liberals the task should have been easier. They had a few days' start upon their rivals, and if properly organised, would have had an alternate waiting in the wings. However, things were not so simple. The Liberal organisation centred around the Monaghan Liberal Association, and the Farney Defense Association. These organisations were not under the control of the leading Liberals in the county, as was the case in the rest of Ulster.³⁴ The Monaghan Liberal Association was almost entirely Catholic³⁵ and was neither affiliated to the Ulster Liberal Association nor the British Liberal party. Party political organisations were not unified units which covered the whole constituency. They were usually on an area basis with links which often stretched across constituency boundaries. Monaghan was even more divorced from mainstream Ulster Liberal politics because it had never affiliated to the Liberal associations in the rest of the province.

32 In addition to Healy, Dillon and MacArdle, someone called McAulay had arrived at Donnelly's palace and declared himself a Parnellite. However, the Bishop, 'gave him no advice.', PRONI Dio (R C)1/11B/13, 11 June, 1883.

33 See letter from W Moffat Clow to Northern Standard asking people to write to their MPs in support of the measure, in Northern Standard, 14 April, 1883, p 3.

34 The Liberal party in Monaghan only existed for a couple of months each time there was an election. Affiliation was to a county association and not a political party. Thus, when the FDA decided to support Healy there was no change in political allegiance by its members.

35 Clow, Patterson, Ancketill of Monaghan DA may have been in MLA.

Another aspect of the Monaghan situation which made it unique was the fact that the Catholic Farney Tenants Defense Association in the south-east of the county retained a complete independence from the Liberals, but yet it was the key to any campaign by an anti-Tory candidate. Thus in Monaghan as nowhere else in Ulster at that time, the Liberal nomination was less important to victory than was addressing the particular interests of specific power groups and their voters. In constituencies where the non-Tories were divided between Protestant, generally Presbyterian, and Catholic, the nomination could be decided by the local Liberal committee. In Monaghan where the Presbyterians had erstwhile been essential to victory the Catholics nevertheless made up over 80% of Liberal voters. The 1883 by-election was to demonstrate emphatically that the Catholic population was Liberal only while that party was the only viable alternative to the Conservatives. Once there was the possibility of a Nationalist victory, the Catholic population would desert the Liberals en masse.

On Friday, 9 June, Givan had travelled to Monaghan to discuss his impending resignation with his principal supporters.³⁶ On 11th, Bishop Donnelly had a meeting on the forthcoming contest with the more political members of the clergy, including Dean Smollen of Clones, Fr O'Neill, PP of Monaghan town, but there was no indication of any decision taken as to what course the clergy should take during the forthcoming campaign.³⁷ It is possible that the meeting was an attempt to unite the more nationally minded Hoey and O'Neill with Smollen who was the foremost Liberal cleric in the county. It must have been decided to defer any decision until after the Representative County Meeting in Castleblayney Chapel on 19 June. And, in fact, once the campaign got under way there was not a united clerical front; although Smollen's position for the Liberal was supported by a meagre few priests, the overwhelming majority backed Healy.

The following evening the Liberal Registration Committee met in Monaghan town. It was decided to call the county meeting for Tuesday, 19 June. This Monaghan meeting coincided with Parnell's letter to the

³⁶ Belfast Newsletter, 11 June, p 3.

³⁷ Donnelly's Diary, 11 June, 1883, PRONI, Dio (RC)1/11B/13.

priests and people of Monaghan which appeared in the Belfast Morning News and the Freeman's Journal the following morning. This letter requested that no one be selected as

a Nationalist will shortly address you in the interest of an independent Parliamentary representative for the purpose of turning the promises of the Land Act into performances, and of gaining the other great objects comprised in the National platform.³⁸

The purpose of the committee meeting had not been to select a candidate; that task would not be undertaken until the Castleblayney meeting. However, those who wished to place their names before the county meeting could unofficially test the tenor of public opinion. Thus, John McMahon who had coveted the Liberal nomination for over 12 years was actively canvassing the county by 12 June, particularly in the Clones area but he discovered that his chances were virtually nil.³⁹ Of the other Liberal/Nationalists there was no sign. MacArdle does not appear to have returned to Ireland at all, and just faded out of the scene.

One of the other Liberals who was suggested for the nomination was James B Ross. He was Givan's brother-in-law, and Chairman of the Monaghan Town Commissioners which the Liberals had wrested from the Tories in January 1883. He was one of the most prominent Liberals in the county and was interested in the position. He had travelled to Dublin in an attempt to get support for his candidature from the Government.⁴⁰ However, he had to reluctantly decline the nomination because it was felt that he would receive no support from the Protestant electors.⁴¹

— On 12 June a meeting of the leading county Liberals was held and David Ross QC, was asked to contest the seat. He had recently been appointed to a position in a lucrative practice in Dublin, and he had always taken an active part in Monaghan Liberal politics. However, because of his recent job placement he was unwilling to stand, and he declined the honour. This left only James B Ross who had been already reported as being unsuitable for the nomination. A deputation of Liberal voters

³⁸ Freeman's Journal, 13 June, 1883, p 5.

³⁹ Northern Standard, 16 June, 1883, p 3.

⁴⁰ Freeman's Journal, 17 June, 1883, p 5.

⁴¹ Belfast Newsletter, 19 June, 1883, p 5.

went to Ross' office in Monaghan town on 18 June to request that he stand in the Liberal interest in the county. Thomas Dickson, as ever, was there as the Liberal standard bearer in Ulster, having only arrived from London that morning. Also in attendance was a number of prominent Liberals.⁴² They recognised, "that he always was willing to endeavour to break the chains of landlord tyranny and oppression,"⁴³ and they pledged their individual support to any campaign which he might wage. Ross replied that he feared that the county was about to be handed back to the landlords, but that acting on the advice of friends, ". . . who are well versed in the management of matters relating to the Province of Ulster in the House of Commons," (a thinly veiled reference to Dickson), that he had declined to stand and that he felt that Henry Pringle was the only man for the job.

Ross then introduced Dickson who eulogised Pringle. He pointed out that Pringle only entered the electoral fray with great reluctance. He might also have pointed out that the Liberals only accepted him with a similar reticence. Dickson also made allusion to the fact that there had been a split in the Liberal ranks in the county, adding, "He regretted the division which had occurred in the Liberal ranks in Monaghan. That division, however, was inevitable."⁴⁴ After a number of further suitable stirring phrases Dickson sat down. Pringle responded in glowing terms and then stated that he had initially turned down an approach to contest the county, and he was sure that many would now be surprised that he had decided to let his name go forward. However, having heard that he was the only man likely to carry the constituency he had decided to reconsider. Pringle, of Clonboy House, Clones, was a Presbyterian, and a well known butter merchant in the county. He also farmed a small holding and was thus involved in the same occupation as the majority of the electors of the county. The Pringle family had lived in the Monaghan/Tyrone area for some hundreds of years, and Henry Pringle had

42 Among those present, were John McMurray, Hugh Gill Patterson, William Clow, Andrew Knox, William Bell, Joseph Rowan, Thomas Lyster, James Steen, James Armstrong, James Nesbitt, Robert Pringle, James Mills and Father Mooney. Mooney would appear to have been the only Catholic.

43 People's Advocate, 23 June, 1883, pp 2-3.

44 Ibid.

played a prominent part in the land law reform movement. In normal times it is clear that Pringle would have been a strong candidate.

Thus it was that Pringle let his name go before the Liberal county meeting the following day. There had been a move afoot to see if the Presbyterians would support Healy and show a united front against the Tories. This had come out of a meeting chaired by Canon Hoey and consisting of four delegates; two Catholics, Duffy and McMahon, and two Presbyterians, W Atkinson and Robert Pringle of Castleblayney.⁴⁵ The fact that Henry Pringle addressed the county indicated that no agreement was reached. Also, Pringle's contesting the election suggested that if there were any further meetings they were to no avail.

The major problem which the nationalist camp had to face was whether or not Healy would be able to accept the Chiltern Hundreds in time to have his papers lodged with the High Sheriff of the county so as to be eligible for the contest. To this end, Charles Callan and Joe Biggar objected when Lord Richard Grosvenor moved the writ for the new election on 12 June. Biggar requested that it be postponed until after the passage of the Corrupt Practices Bill, which was then before Parliament. This was opposed by the government, and it was ordered that the writ be issued.⁴⁶

It seems clear that the Home Rule Party had prior knowledge of Givan's impending resignation, otherwise Healy would never have been able to ensure his eligibility to contest the seat in the short space of time between Givan's announcement and nomination day. From the start there had been persistent rumours that either Tim Healy the member for Wexford, or John Dillon who had recently relinquished his Tipperary seat for the first of his many retirements, would contest Monaghan.⁴⁷ Healy was obviously favoured by Parnell, but Dillon was the reserve if

⁴⁵ Freeman's Journal, 18 June, 1883, p 5. No addresses are given, but Robert Pringle is known to have been a brother of the Liberal candidate. He was also a prominent Presbyterian in the Castleblayney area. McMahon was probably John J McMahon of Ballybay who had canvassed the county in the Liberal interest. At the Castleblayney meeting there was an E Duffy, a delegate from Aghabog. Atkinson was not a delegate at the County Representative Meeting.

⁴⁶ Belfast Newsletter, 13 June, 1883, p 7.

⁴⁷ Dublin Evening Mail, 13 June, 1883, p 3.

Healey's resignation was not received in time. Dillon had retired in May from his seat due to ill-health, and that being so he might have been less capable of contesting the county than Healy, whose name was well known in the north due to his claim to be the father of the 'Healy clause.'

The speed with which the election was called may have been a tactical move on the part of the government. Givan's resignation became known on 9 June, the writ arrived in the constituency five days later, and nomination day was 25 June, but two weeks since the possibility of a contest became known. That the Irish Party got wind of the forthcoming election at an early date seems certain. And it is possible that the surprising release of Healy, Davitt and Quinn on 4 June was an attempt to detract from the romantic appeal which an incarcerated nationalist invariably has for Irish voters. Parnell, however, outmanoeuvred the Whigs with the help of a forewarning from some where; a point which the Northern Standard was quick to seize upon.

It is a strange fact that the Home Rule Party were aware that a vacancy was about to be created in this constituency, and had all their preparations completed to contest it, before Mr Givan's appointment was even rumoured in the county. Consequently Mr Tim Healy was enabled to resign his seat for Wexford, accept the 48 Chiltern Hundreds, and be the first in the field.

On the Conservative side the contest was no less important. The 1880 General Election had indicated that 'big house' Tories were not the most advantageous candidates. Thus it was decided at the Conservative Registration Society in Monaghan town on 15 June not to nominate a candidate, and after making a number of preliminary arrangements it adjourned until the following Monday. After this official party meeting ended, a Protestant tenant farmers' meeting was held in the Assembly Rooms in the town. It was chaired by Thomas Dunne who was described simply as a tenant farmer.⁴⁹ The proceedings remained secret but a programme was agreed upon.

48 Northern Standard, 23 June, 1883, p 2.

49 Belfast Newsletter, 16 June, 1883, p 6. This meeting was described by the Press Association in ibid, as having been an Orange meeting. The County Minutes mentions a Thomas Dunn from Crappanagh Dooat who was District Secretary of Dartrey District lodge during the 1870s.

The decision to let the Protestant workers nominate the Conservative candidate was applauded in the columns of the Northern Standard. A correspondent signing himself 'Tenant Farmer, Newbliss' claimed,

If the Protestant tenant farmers can secure a man who will meet their views on the land and other important questions, he will receive the support of many of the Liberal Roman Catholics and others who are disgusted with the present Government, and the way in which the Land Act has been rendered practically abortive by 50 incapable commissioners and valuers (sic).

This view was reiterated by 'One of Yourselves,' who urged that a man be chosen whom all Protestants could support, and one who would properly represent them once in Westminster. He spelt out particularly opposition to Bradlaugh, Denominational Education, the recent Government pact with the Roman Catholic Hierarchy, and the expense incurred in the administration of the 1881 Land Act. He continued,

We want the enormous expense at present incurred by Government in paying judges, commissioners, sub-commissioners, their assistants, valuers and agents, applied for the benefit of poor 51 tenants and to the reduction of their rents.

He concluded by pointing out that the government was investing £20 to remove £1 off a tenant's rent.

These sentiments are an obvious indication of a class consciousness within the Protestant tenant farmer community, and similar statements which emerged during the run up to the election indicated that there was a basic similarity between the aspirations of Catholic tenant farmers and their Protestant counterparts. However, the ethnic factor was uppermost in Ireland in 1883 as the Monaghan election would prove, but the similarity of views expressed indicates that the socio-economic commonality between Catholic and Protestant farmers which had swept Givan and Findlater to power in 1880 was still evident three years later. The Tories in Monaghan had moved from the old position of the local oligarchy which knew what was best for Protestant society in the county, to one which more closely resembles a modern political party where members of society met in assembly and democratically selected the candidate who best represented the views of the majority of the delegates.

50 Northern Standard, 16 June, 1883, p 3.

51 Ibid.

This would ensure that Protestant workers were now more ready to accept the ethnic similarity than they had been before. Unfortunately this transition took place five years too late. If it had happened in 1878 then it is unlikely that the county would have been lost in 1880. By 1883, however, it was too late.

Recognising the strength of a Conservative who could attract the tenant farmers and erstwhile Liberals, the Freeman's Journal stated that an officer of the Dublin Constitutional Club had gone to London,

. . . interviewing the leaders of the Conservative Party with the object of inducing them to pay the expenses of Mr Monroe QC, should he be selected to contest the county Monaghan. Mr Monroe⁵² will not fight unless the party pay his expenses.

There is little doubt that this was a complete fabrication, but this sort of statement would seriously undermine Munro's position with Presbyterian Liberals who had generally voted Liberal. The story was followed up by the Dublin Daily Express which claimed that the Carlton Club had decided to pay Munro's expenses. There was no proof either in support or contradiction of these suggestions, but the fact that it was not carried by either of the local papers suggests that it was contrived in Dublin or London. In any case, the Belfast Newsletter was quick to recognise the disastrous effect that the tainting of Munro with Tory blue could have upon many of his more radical supporters.

Now these rumours have no foundation in fact. Mr Munro has not been selected by the Carlton Club. The selection is purely local, and was made after meetings held to consider the question, by the Conservative gentry and yeomen of the county of Monaghan. To say the least, therefore, it was very imprudent to circulate a rumour that Mr Munro is the nominee of the Carlton Club. Such a statement might have had a damaging influence on the Conservative candidate, and it shows how Dublin people know about the feelings of Northern Conservatives, who are quite competent to choose suitable representatives without seeking advice from sources outside the bounds of the constituency. ⁵³

The Protestant tenant farmers had indicated that they would accept no upper class nominee, and this was recognised by the county society. The Belfast Newsletter claimed that the report had commenced in the Freeman's Journal and that it was simply a political ploy to undermine

⁵² Freeman's Journal, 15 June, 1883, p 5.

⁵³ Belfast Newsletter, 18 June, 1883, p 4.

the determination of the Protestants to support 'their' candidate. If the report was a contrivance then it is likely that it was directed at the Presbyterian Liberals who were viewed by both sides as holding the key to the representation.

The Liberals were in considerable disarray as their inability to select a candidate indicated. The vacillation of both James B and David Ross, when they each virtually agreed to contest the seat and then withdrew was underlined by the eventual candidate, Henry Pringle, who had initially turned down the nomination and only reconsidered at the eleventh hour when it became clear that there was no one else. In fact, there had even been an approach made to a Belfast Justice of the Peace, John Shaw Brown, but he had refused the nomination. Even J H Fay, the cousin of the Home Rule MP for county Cavan, and an ex-High Sheriff was approached. The determination of the Liberals to fight the county was a bitter blow to the Conservatives, as they had hoped that they would be able to swing the entire Protestant vote behind their candidate. This is evidenced by the fact that Munro contested the seat not as a Conservative, but as a Constitutionalist. To attract the Liberals in Monaghan the Munroites had to ensure that he took a satisfactory stand on the land issue. It would be the key to the Liberals' votes, and thus Munro announced that he would support Lord George Hamilton's Land Bill which hoped to revise the purchase clauses in the 1881 Land Act, under which more than half of the tenants with holdings over one acre were excluded. Also excluded from the workings of the Act were the estimated 150,000 leaseholders and 130,000 occupiers who were in arrears with their rent.⁵⁴

Hamilton's bill wished to revise the purchase clauses which would have permitted tenants to buy their holdings at the expiration of their leases. At present the landlord could evict the incumbent and then re-install him as a caretaker, or else put in a different tenant. The Route Tenants Defense Association had decided to fight this issue in the Antrim area and had got the Ballymoney solicitor, Robert C Martin to state a case to a Queen's Council, and it was decided to get John

54 F S L Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine, (London, 1975), p 172.

Munro to fight this important case on the behalf of the tenant.⁵⁵
On the basis of Munro's opinion, read before the Association on 19 April, a committee posed a resolution before the Route Association on 21 June which attacked Hamilton's scheme and concluded,

Under these circumstances, we deem it our duty to express regret that Mr Munro has advocated before the electors of Monaghan the impracticable and objectionable scheme propounded by Lord G Hamilton, and we further express our regret and surprise that the proposed lien upon the local rates was approved by Mr Parnell in the House of Commons.

That, therefore, in relation to the Monaghan election, we think the candidate who fully endorses the policy of the Ulster Land Conference is most worthy of the support of the farmers of Monaghan.⁵⁶

This was a considerable blow to the chances of Munro gaining the support of Monaghan's Liberal Presbyterians who would have looked towards the northern associations like the TDAs and the Land Committee, and could be relied upon to take their lead from the Ulster Liberals. Such a resolution bolstered Pringle's resolve to fight the seat. The timing of the Route resolution was clearly to coincide with the Monaghan election. If the appendage had not been agreed upon then it is possible that Pringle would not have come forward, nor would the Presbyterians have retained the balance of power which they were reputed to hold. It is likely that if the decision had gone the other way, and Munro had been endorsed, or at least not attacked, that Pringle would either not have stood or else retired early in the contest. It was the supreme irony that the Route Association decided to attack Hamilton's bill on the basis of Munro's opinion, and that Munro probably only supported the Hamilton measure because it was as radical as he could espouse without alienating the landlords of the county which would have ensured defeat.

Healy's position appeared secure. However, he had to receive at least the benevolent neutrality of Donnelly who had always retained a firm grip on his parishioners during his two decades in the episcopacy of Clogher. Healy's difficulty with the Catholic Church resulted from

⁵⁵ S C McElroy, The Route Land Crusade. Being an authentic Account of the efforts made to advance Land Reform by the Route Tenants Defence Association . . . , (Coleraine, n d), p 40.

⁵⁶ Ibid, p 41. This the Ulster Land Committee did on 19 June, when at a meeting it endorsed Pringle; see, Dublin Evening Mail, 20 June, 1883, p 4.

his stance towards the Pope's attitude regarding the Parnell Tribute. It is clear that the Pope's opposition to the movement to disburse money to Parnell, and Croke's immediate support for it had led to a strict divergence between the Roman directive and Irish nationalism. Healy had been more than outspoken in his attacks on the Papal ban. The Freeman's Journal recognised the difficulty which Healy might face as a result of his overreaction, and on 14 June it commenced an editorial campaign in his favour. Claiming the Healy Clause to be the Magna Carta of tenants' freedom, it continued, " . . . if there were not men like Mr Healy suffering inconvenience, loss and imprisonment, . . . where would the tenants of Ireland be today?"⁵⁸ The Freeman also suggested that 'Healy's idiotic circular' speech was similar to O'Connell's stance on the veto issue seventy years previously. This was the start of a continuous stream of praise, sometimes going to ridiculous lengths, which was to clear Healy's name and ensure united Catholic voting power behind his candidacy.

The endorsement of Healy made for problems for Donnelly. After his outburst on the Holy Father, Donnelly could hardly be seen as being too closely associated with him. The Protestant press, of course, played upon Donnelly's difficulties. For example, the Northern Standard on 16 June carried an editorial which discussed the pressure which the bishop must have been under from Rome, Dublin and London. It suggested that Donnelly's actions would show whether there had been a compact entered into between the Catholic hierarchy and the government to support the Liberals at the next General Election in return for a system of National Education.

He knows that a large majority of his people would refuse to follow his lead in such a compact. He has, therefore, met the difficulty by running out of the county; and by leaving matters to drift. Deputations cannot see him, and it is hoped his non-interference may be attributed to important Church duties calling him to another county, and a distant part of his diocese. 59

58 Freeman's Journal, 14 June, 1883, p 4.

59 Northern Standard, 16 June, 1883, p 3.

Donnelly, had, in fact, gone to the parish of Fintona on Thursday, 14 June. There was nothing unusual in this per se, but it was not uncommon for a Bishop to postpone long trips to outlying parts of the diocese when an important election was pending. However, Donnelly did not content himself with the usual 24 or 36 hour visit. He arrived in Fintona, which was not in the constituency of Monaghan, on Thursday evening and did not return until late on Monday, 19 June.⁶⁰ This ensured that he did not have the painful task of interviewing the Liberal candidate who would, no doubt, have been accompanied by the inevitable Dickson. This was a blow for the Liberals, but it also harmed the Nationalists who had planned a meeting for Sunday, 17 June in Monaghan town, and they had to cancel this lest it incurred the Bishop's displeasure.⁶¹

This put the Bishop virtually out of the political picture until after the Castleblayney meeting on the day following his arrival in Monaghan. There would thus be no time to meet and discuss the forthcoming contest with the various parties prior to the all-important meeting to select an anti-Tory candidate. Donnelly's presence would be extremely important during the period 19-26 June to whoever emerged victorious from Castleblayney Chapel, but his absence during the preceding week ensured his neutrality. Donnelly in fact only met Pringle by accident on the train from Monaghan to Clones,⁶² and his absence probably aided Healy more than it did Pringle. In any case, his comments when he heard the result suggest that this was his personal predilection. But the Bishop had also his clergy to consider as well as his parishioners, and two of his most senior clerics (and both personal friends) Smollen of Clones and Hoey of Carrickmacross were opposed politically. Hoey was well known for his extremely orthodox nationalism, whereas Smollen was one of the most prominent Liberals in the county. Donnelly's actions, then, were a classic case of internal diplomacy. After all, he had to work with both of these men after the election was over.

⁶⁰ People's Advocate, 23 June, 1883, p 5.

⁶¹ Belfast Newsletter, 18 June, 1883, p 5.

⁶² PRONI Dio (RC)1/11B/13, Donnelly's Diary, 22 June, 1883.

Healy had kept himself active since his release from prison on 4 June. After a brief rest in England, where he presumably held discussions with Parnell over his prospective candidacy for Monaghan, he returned to Ireland. He surprised a number of Nationalists when, at a meeting of the Cork Evicted Tenants Association, he stated that the 'No Rent Manifesto' was a mistake, and one which he never would have supported if he had been consulted; adding that he would not back another call for 'No Rent.' Such a statement, coming from Healy, was unusual to say the least.⁶³ It was he, after all, who had been Parnell's secretary during the tour of America in the winter of 1880. Presumably Healy was casting a glance towards the radical Protestant tenant farmer vote of the county, and he hoped that such statements would allay some of their fears. But another statement which he made was even more significant, although not with regard to the Monaghan by-election. He pointed out that the landlords relied upon the English government, and that it was about to be defeated. At the next election, he claimed, the two great English parties would gain roughly equal numbers of seats, the Parnellites could count upon 80 members returned. Thus, " . . . they were within a measurable distance of an election struggle on which the fate of the Irish race for at least a generation will depend."⁶⁴ Healy recognised the importance of the time for the Parnellites. He was to be the first step into the 'loyal Province of Ulster,' and it was essential that he do well.

The following day Healy spoke in Bandon, and he may have somewhat redeemed himself in Parnell's eyes to some extent by his strong support of the Parnell Tribute.⁶⁵ In any case, the movement to place Healy before the electors of Monaghan could not have been stopped at this late juncture. Parnell sent a telegram to the Wexford Borough Home Rule Club, asking them to permit Healy to relinquish his seat so as to contest Monaghan. It was a difficult position for the leader of the Irish party, as was demonstrated by his difficulties on county Leitrim

⁶³ Dublin Evening Mail, 1 June, 1883, p 2.

⁶⁴ London Times, 15 June, 1883, p 10.

⁶⁵ London Times, 16 June, 1883, p

at the 1880 General Election when Tottenham was elected in the face of a nationalist vote split four ways. There would have been little benefit to the cause if Parnell was to run into extreme difficulties in Wexford as a result of his persuading Healy to relinquish that seat. The borough was safely nationalist, but if there was to be a split vote then there was the possibility of a Liberal capturing the seat.⁶⁶

In any case, Parnell received not a whimper from the Wexford Home Rulers. They proved themselves to be party men to the last. In their reply they stated their deep regret at losing Healy, but,

. . . in obedience to the call of duty, we unreservedly place the question of his retirement from the representation of Wexford in the hands of the leader of the Irish people. That in the event of Mr Healy succeeding in Monaghan, we pledge ourselves to support only as his successor here the candidate having the recommendations⁶⁷ of Messrs Parnell and Healy.

The reaction of the electors of Wexford indicated, if further evidence was needed, that Parnell had managed by mid 1883 to forge a modern political party. As noted above, the Irish National League was primarily an electoral machine,⁶⁸ and one which was under the control of a relatively few men. The temporary 'organising committee' was never replaced. The principal members were Parnell who was chairman, Biggar, one of the treasurers, and Healy, one of the three secretaries.⁶⁹

Healy's position was now safe. He had extricated himself from the representation of Wexford, and now all that remained was for him to defeat Munro and Pringle at the poll. The government's moving of the writ for the election so speedily meant that there would be a short campaign. This required Healy's supporters to be well organised. There is no evidence that he had ever been in the county before and he was thus at a disadvantage. However, it is likely that he knew roughly where Monaghan was, which cannot be claimed for Parnell himself, who

⁶⁶ At the by-election caused by Healy's resignation W H K Redmond received 307 votes to the O'Connor Don's 126. A marked victory but one in which a split vote would have seen a Liberal victory.

⁶⁷ Dublin Evening Mail, 15 June, 1883, p 3.

⁶⁸ This gave Parnell control of the movement both inside and outside Westminster.

⁶⁹ C C O'Brien, Parnell and his Party, (Oxford, 1957), pp 127-128.

later said they had gone to the extreme north of the island,⁷⁰ though he had spent 12 hours in Monaghan town in September 1881.⁷¹

The next major step was for Healy to defeat Pringle at the Castleblayney meeting. The Representative County Meeting, as it was known, was supposedly a Liberal nominating body. Thus it should have been weighted in favour of Pringle. However, it was more of an anti-Tory body which could select any man whom they thought would keep the representation of the county in the hands of the tenant farmer class. Thus Healy could hope to appeal on the basis of his clause to their economic well-being. In fact, the meeting, always held in the Castleblayney Chapel, was almost exclusively a Catholic affair. Whereas the Presbyterians were supposedly the key to the anti-Tory nomination and subsequent victory in 1880, they were hardly represented at the meeting. And although the use of planter surnames as a guide to religious affiliation is not exact, it can generally indicate the complexion of an assembly.

The People's Advocate carried a report of the meeting, and also the names of the delegates. Of these, only Napoleon Wall of Clones, W Herbert of Newbliss, W Johnston of Inniskeen, and Robert Pringle and W Adair of Castleblayney have Protestant names. Further, it is surprising that Johnston should be a representative from Inniskeen, unless he was a Catholic. The 1871 Census gives a total of 1,715 persons in that part of the parish which is in county Monaghan, and of these 1,652 were Catholics, 53 Church of Ireland and 10 Presbyterians.⁷²

The delegates broke down as follows, 28 Catholic Clerics; County Monaghan Liberal Association, 16 Catholic delegates, one Protestant; Parish Delegates, 78 Catholics, 4 Protestants.⁷³ Of a total of 127 delegates there were 122 Catholics and 5 Protestants. Needless to say, at an election when there was a call for Protestants to support a Constitutionalist and Catholics to support a Nationalist, the chance of a candidate

70 Parnell boasted that he had gone to 'the remote north' and that they had taught the Orangemen a lesson, Lyons, Charles Stewart Parnell, p 249.

71 Livingston, Monaghan Story, p 339.

72 Census of Ireland, 1871, Part 1 Vol 3, p 838.

73 People's Advocate, 23 June, 1883, p 1. The Freeman's Journal claimed only two of the parish delegates were Protestants, Pringle and Adair from Castleblayney, Freeman's Journal, 20 June, 1883, p 5.

like Pringle to be selected to represent both Protestant and Catholic was highly unlikely. And the hopelessness of his cause was demonstrated by the fact that only four votes were recorded in support of his candidacy.

At the Liberal meeting William Ancketill rose to address the chair, but immediately Daniel MacAleese interrupted that as Ancketill was not a delegate he was out of order in attempting to speak. Canon Hoey, who was chairing the meeting attempted to get him a hearing, but MacAleese again objected and Hoey beckoned Ancketill to sit down.⁷⁴ At this point the meeting decided that all visitors should leave the hall. After order had been restored the two addresses were read before the meeting. Healy described himself as a Nationalist, whereas Pringle used the term Independent Liberal. Archdeacon Smollen proposed, and PT Donnelly of Clones seconded that Pringle be selected. There were then a number of animated speeches after which a vote was taken and only five delegates showed a preference for the Presbyterian.

The trend had already been set in Farney on 17 June. It was usual for Nationalist campaigns to commence on a Sunday, with the first meeting of the campaign being held at the chapel gates after evening mass. The Healyites chose Magheracloone Church to start the campaign, and the Parish Priest, Father McQuade gave a sermon on the impending contest. He reminded them that their last representative had promised much but had then deserted them for personal advancement. He continued,

The name of Mr Healy had been mentioned as a candidate, and he was a man who had already proved himself worthy of their best wishes and their confidence. The name had been mentioned of a certain QC, but they should not forget that persons holding a similar position had only used the position of member of Parliament to climb over the shoulders of the people into place and power. If Mr Healy was not returned by a hundred to one at this election it would be a disgrace to the County Monaghan.⁷⁵

This sermon was to set the trend for the rest of the campaign. Time and again Munro was forced to defend his profession because Givan had deserted the constituency so abruptly. Also, the firm backing given to Healy by the local Curates and Parish Priests was a key to his campaign.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ People's Advocate, 23 June, 1883, p 2, and Freeman's Journal, 17 June, 1883, p 5.

This ensured a united ethnic voting pattern for the Nationalist candidate, and belied the prediction made by the Belfast Newsletter that some Catholics would vote against Healy.⁷⁶ However, the principal organ of northern Conservatism was realistic enough to recognise that almost all Catholics would vote Nationalist as would the Catholic clerics. They erred only in so far as there does not appear to have been any Catholic support for Pringle or Munro.

After Mass the congregation flocked out of the church and there was a meeting held in the chapel yard. The crowd was addressed by Timothy Harrington MP,⁷⁷ and he referred to the 'pointed and patriotic observations' of the curate. He then went on to point out that when the people of Ireland were fighting for the national parliament at Westminster he was sure that they would have a friend in the representative for county Monaghan. To this end, Mr Parnell had decided to present them with 'a candidate of whose ability there could be no question, and whose interest in the National cause had already been proved in a way that must commend itself to the sympathy of a noble people.'⁷⁸ Harrington then made mention of the effort which Healy had made in 1881 to ensure that there would be some backbone in the Land Act. The meeting terminated with cheers for Harrington, Healy and Parnell, at which point the only one of the three present went to Carrickmacross to address another meeting.

Parnell had arranged for an impressive cast of characters to arrive in Monaghan in support of Healy. Harrington was the first to arrive, but he pointed out to the audience in the Market Square in Carrickmacross that he would be joined by John Dillon⁷⁹ who was admired

⁷⁶ Belfast Newsletter, 19 June, 1883, p 4.

⁷⁷ Timothy Charles Harrington, 1851-1910. Educated TCD and called to the bar in 1887. Founder, editor of Kerry Sentinel, Secretary of Irish Land League and National Land League. Devised the 'Plan of Campaign.' MP for Westmeath, 1883-1885, and Harbour Division of Dublin, 1885-1910.

⁷⁸ People's Advocate,

⁷⁹ John Dillon, 1851-1927. Educated Catholic University, Dublin. Accompanied Parnell on fund raising trips to America in 1879. MP Tipperary, 1880-1883, East Mayo, 1885-1918. Imprisoned under Coercion Act on a number of occasions. Joined Justin McCarthy in the Anti-Parnellite party after the split in 1890.

even by his adversaries and Thomas Sexton⁸⁰ whom he described as the Demosthenes of the Irish Party. His speech was of little import, and Harrington appears to have been but holding the fort until the others arrived. This they did the following day. Dillon, Sexton, Small, Peter Byrne, a merchant from Newry and M Jennings from Newcastle on Tyne booked into Currans' Hotel on the morning of Monday, 18 June.⁸¹ They immediately went to visit Daniel MacAleese at the office of the People's Advocate, and he then conducted them along with Harrington to the residence of the leading nationalists in the town. On their return to their hotel they discovered that there was a large crowd gathered who were anxious to hear the visiting dignitaries speak. MacAleese then chaired an impromptu meeting from a window of the building.⁸² Sexton was the first to speak and after the usual statements about the evidence in the county of the oppression of the rack renter and the 'crowbar brigade,' he alluded to the Liberals in terms which indicated that the campaign would not be insipid:

This county had not long ago been wrested from the hands of the traditional oppressors of the people, and had passed into the hands of those bastard philanthropists who had been tried in the balance and been found wanting. (Great cheering). . . Mr Healy . . . (had) stood by as well as struggled for the farmers at large be they Catholic, Protestant or Presbyterian; and shame upon the man whatever his creed might be, who would allow the instincts of bigotry to create separation or keep him from acknowledging the energies of a man who had stood by the Protestant as well as the Catholic farmers. . . He now thanked them heartily and he bade the Whigs and the place hunters to keep their weather eye open⁸³ and look out for squalls.

Sexton was followed by John Dillon. He reminded his audience that he had been in Monaghan at the great Scotstown meeting in March, 1881.⁸⁴

80 Thomas Sexton, 1848-1932. Worked on railways as a youth before being elected Home Rule MP for Sligo county, 1880-1885. Represented West Belfast, 1886-1892 and North Kerry, 1892-1896.

81 People's Advocate, 23 June, 1883, p 2, and Belfast Newsletter, 19 June, 1883, p 5.

82 Ibid.

83 Ibid.

84 See above, pp 416-7.

This may have been the reason why he was included in the Healy entourage, as this would make him one of the few nationalists to have been in the area. Small was similarly brought to Monaghan because as a Newry solicitor, he would have been acquainted with many of the leading nationalists in south Monaghan at least. Also, his position was not unlike that of Healy as Small pointed out. He had been elected MP for Wexford county 14 days before. The electors of Wexford did not know him, nor did they make that a reason for not supporting him: "they were assured he was a Nationalist, and they selected him as their representative." This was what it was hoped the nationalists of Monaghan would do with Healy. The meeting broke up and after dining at the hotel the group made their way to Castleblayney Chapel for the Representative County Meeting where they hoped to speak in favour of Healy's candidature.

As this was taking place the only opposition which Healy would have at the meeting was being selected. As noted above⁸⁵ after a large degree of prevarication and indecision the Liberal nominee was chosen in Ross' office in Monaghan town. Pringle was to be the Liberal candidate, something which Harrington had hoped would not happen. The other candidate did not have to face a selection meeting in Castleblayney. By Monday, Munro's address to the constituency was already out. He had arrived in the area on the previous Saturday,⁸⁶ and was addressing small groups of supporters immediately.⁸⁷ He was to hold his first meeting in the Assembly Rooms, Monaghan town on that evening. As was to be the case throughout his campaign, there were to be no landlords upon his platform. The meeting was chaired by Robert Wilson, a tenant farmer from Newgrove.⁸⁸

85 See above, pp 441-2.

86 Belfast Newsletter, 18 June, 1883, p 5.

87 There had been a meeting of Protestant tenant farmers on 15 June in Monaghan. Possibly this was organised by the Orangemen. In any case, it was independent of the local Tory machine. Northern Standard, 16 June, 1883, p 3.

88 The local press consistently describe Munro's political associates as tenant farmers. It is not improbable that he is the same Robert Wilson who had been Worshipful Master of L.O.L. 585 in 1862, Castleblayney district; see, Monaghan County Minutes, p 92.

He had been selected to chair the meeting at the suggestion of John Armstrong, seconded by William Elliott.⁸⁹

Munro's speech stressed the principles which were included in his address. He gave pride of place to the land question, and his stance could not be described as token support. The address stated,

Notwithstanding the attempts made by recent legislation to meet the grievances and ameliorate the condition of the farmers, I entertain a strong opinion that the real effort has yet to be made in the only direction by which it is possible to arrive at a permanent improvement in their position. Any measure that would enable the farmer to become the owner of the land he cultivates would be remedial legislation of the highest kind. 90

And these sentiments were expressed by Munro throughout the campaign. He constantly advocated a move towards peasant proprietorship. This was not the orthodox stance of Conservatives in Ireland. But if there was to be any chance of winning the Liberal Presbyterians over to the Conservatives then some move in that direction had to be made. Similarly, the Nationalists mentioned all the major political issues during their campaign except the return of the national parliament in an effort to woo the Presbyterians.

The rest of Munro's political creed was straightforward. He wished to have some of the present taxes which were levied upon the county cess replaced by the Imperial exchequer so as to remove some of the burden off the farmers. Similarly, the reduction of the Poor Rates, he argued, would remove one of the causes of agricultural depression. These views on the taxation of the rural classes were something which all farmers would applaud. The 'conservative' aspect of his address was that he opposed sectarian schools and what he termed 'Bradlaughism.' This referred to the admission of Bradlaugh into Westminster without taking the oath, and 'Bradlaughism' was seen as the creeping disease of atheism in the British Isles.

But to return to the speech; Munro informed his audience that his very first case had been in county Monaghan, and that he had addressed

89 The Armstrong family consisted principally of tenant farmers from the Clones/Scotshouse area. In addition, many of them were members of Orange lodges in that area; see, ibid., passim.

90 Northern Standard, 23 June, 1883, p 2.

his first jury in the county. He also countered a charge that he was a renegade to Presbyterianism which had been circulated in the constituency, claiming rather that he came from a long line of Episcopalians but that his mother was the daughter of a Presbyterian minister, Rev James Harvey⁹¹ of Redrock, and that he knew the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Shorter Catechism. He also stressed that he was the son of a tenant farmer and that he did not view the 1881 Land Act as a final solution. This was a claim which had been put forward by Gladstone, and may well be the reason why Pringle was to describe himself as an Independent Liberal. On Imperial affairs Munro attacked the government's attitude of conciliation in south Africa and he also opposed the sending out of 30,000 troops to slaughter a few Egyptian peasants.

Munro also opposed Joseph Chamberlain's proposal to introduce universal manhood suffrage. He asked his audience the question,

Where would the tenant farmers be then (A Voice - Nowhere.) They would have Communism before six months - (loud cheers) - and they would all go to the workhouse and disqualify themselves in another way (laughter).⁹²

Naturally, the tenant farmers who had the vote were opposed to the granting of the franchise to the urban workers because it would result in the massive diminution of their influence. But the Protestant tenant farmers were opposed for the added reason that it would amplify the nationalist voice to such an extent that the views of the loyalist minority would be drowned out. Ten years previously Colonel Saunderson said of the ballot that it would lead inexorably towards separation,

. . . it would play into the hands of men whose views would be so repugnant to the majority of Englishmen that the latter would become tired of being ruled by Irish votes, and break the union in despair.⁹³

⁹¹ Redrock congregation was located in County Armagh, and Rev. Harvey was a prominent member of the community. It was essential that Munro establish his Presbyterian credentials.

⁹² Northern Standard, 23 June, 1883, p 3.

⁹³ R Lucas, Colonel Saunderson MP A Memoir, (London, 1908), p

His opposition to the augmentation of the electoral democracy which was afflicting the position of the ruling classes was a common view of the agrarian wing of the Irish Conservative party. In Belfast, speaking to the supporters of Johnston of Ballykilbeg a Tory could not afford to give utterance to such sentiments, but in Monaghan where the Protestant vote was almost entirely rural there was an advantage in such remarks. With universal suffrage at least eight Liberal seats and two Conservative seats would transfer to the Nationalists.

Munro's final point was one which was to be at the centre of all Conservative meetings, the effect that a Liberal candidate would have upon the electoral outcome. Munro pointed out that every man (by which he meant Protestant) who voted for Pringle or who did not vote was, in fact, voting for the Parnellite, and asked the question,

was such a stain to rest on their great county? Would they be the first constituency in Ulster to give their sanction to the Land League creed? . . . The battle was not one of party conflicts . . . Higher principles were now at stake, order was confronted with disorder, loyalty was arraigned against open and underhand treason. They were fighting for the Queen and the constitution, he might also say for political existence . . . 94

Here was the key to the whole election as far as the Protestant tenant farmers were concerned. The time for Liberal and Conservative had passed, and there was now only those who were in favour of the Queen and constitution, and those who were opposed. It was a case of loyal Ulster against the rest; Cuchulain versus Queen Maeve. Interestingly, county Cavan which had returned two Home Rule MPs since 1874 was not considered to have been a part of Ulster.

This meeting, the first in a long series, was also addressed by a number of local tenant farmers and George Knight, the Clones solicitor. Knight was one of the major power brokers on the Conservative side in the county. His support was of crucial importance if the orange vote was to be delivered. He was the Deputy Master of the County Grand Lodge of Monaghan and as such was the major liaison between the landlord and Conservative hierarchy in the county and the Orange tenant farmers. Knight's speech was enthusiastically received during which he claimed that, "He knew in his heart that a good tenant right bill would

do the good landlord no harm, and they wished the bad landlords all the injury it would bring them."⁹⁵ Another solicitor, William McWilliam spoke of the regret which they all felt at the Liberals running a candidate and thus aiding the return of one of that party whose aim was to divide the last link connecting Ireland and England. The contest was already to be a religious one. There would be Protestant loyalists and Catholic nationalists. Monaghan had always been a loyalist county, in terms of representation, and the position of the Protestants was summed up by Dr J C Hall when he asked if the county which sent the men to relieve Captain Boycott was going to return Healy to parliament. And that was a question which would not be answered for two weeks.

The Liberal candidate had been selected by a mixture of popular acclamation and the fact that no-one else would undertake the task. His case had then been taken to the Castleblayney Chapel where he had been overwhelmingly rejected. The question was now whether he would retire gracefully or remain in the running. Both the supporters of the nationalist and the Constitutionalist candidates hoped that Pringle would decide that discretion was the better part of valour, but this was not to prove to be the case. It could be argued that the defeated prospective candidate must retire from a contest so that he does not interfere with the man who was chosen by the delegates. This being the case, then Pringle should never have considered contesting the county. However, Pringle and Healy were members of two very distinct groupings, and there was no desertion of party affiliation by Pringle if he stood. Indeed, it could be argued that Healy should not have been present at the meeting as it was ostensibly a Liberal party meeting and he was not a supporter of that party. This being the case, it was Pringle's duty to keep the Liberal banner to the fore. The fact was that the Representative meeting was an anti-Tory meeting, not affiliated to any political party, and there was no reason why a defeated Liberal should not stand. In 1880 it had been a Liberal gathering, but then there had been no alternative. Pringle thus felt obliged to stand in the forthcoming election although it was clear, if the Castleblayney meeting was at all representative of Catholic opinion in the county, that he had absolutely no chance of winning the seat as they would poll almost

95 Ibid.

exclusively for Healy. Both loyalists and nationalists suggested that his campaign was specifically to defeat their candidate, but Pringle probably felt that he had a duty to the 2,500 Liberal voters who had recorded their preference for Givan at the last election to contest the seat and thus give them an alternative to what would otherwise be a sectarian campaign, fraught with all the negative trappings which that would entail.

Pringle's address was carried in the People's Advocate, and although he referred to himself as an independent Liberal, presumably to divorce himself from Gladstone's claims that the 1881 Act was the final solution and also the government's coercive measures, he came forward to solicit votes upon 'Liberal principles.'⁹⁶ He did, however, state that he would sit as an Independent Liberal, presumably without the party whip, and that he would act upon his own judgement in all matters pertaining to the position of the tenant farmers. He wished to see a peasant proprietary and unlike Munro who supported Hamilton's bill, he advocated that the entire cost should be advanced by the government. Further amendment to the 1881 Act was required, particularly to ensure that no rent increase be levied on tenant improvements, and also to ensure that the occupiers of townparks be protected. He also wished to see the Grand Jury system done away with and its replacement with county boards elected by the people. Finally, he declared himself, " . . . opposed to Atheism and Infidelity, whether in the House of Commons or out of it."⁹⁷

Healy's address was carried in the same edition on the same page. He reminded the electors of Monaghan that he was the man who had brought in the Healy clause which ensured that no rent increase could be charged upon improvements made by the tenant to his holding. He was also in support of 'the creation of an OCCUPYING PROPRIETORY' which he claimed was opposed by the Liberals. As with Pringle, he wished to see the abolition of the Grand Jury system; however, he could claim to having brought forward a motion to this effect in the House of Commons in 1882.

⁹⁶ People's Advocate, 23 June, 1883, p 5.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

Healy also wished to see the Poor Law Boards and the Magistracy democratised believing that this would aid the rural peace. And a rural county such as Monaghan would induce him to support all measures which would bring agricultural and social reform. Finally he promised, if elected, "that hereafter no Elector will ever be able to reproach with Pledge-Breaking or Place-Taking Your faithful servants (sic) T M Healy."⁹⁸

Healy's final statement about placehunters was an obvious sideswipe at Givan's departure for the Crown Solicitorship. This was a good ploy, because Healy was able to attack the Liberals from whence Givan had sprung as well as the legal profession which was where Munro earned his living. What Healy did not point out was that he, too, was in the legal profession, and would be called to the Irish bar in 1884.⁹⁹ He managed to persuade the electors that apprentice lawyers were, somehow, more blessed with integrity than those who had qualified. With regard to the other charge, that of deserting the constituency, Healy would similarly decide to relocate his parliamentary membership less than two and one-half years later. He thus remained with the people of Monaghan six months less than did Givan.

The attitude of the People's Advocate would be crucial to the chances of any prospective Catholic MP. The editorial on 16 June regarding Givan's impending departure had been reasonably kind to the outgoing senior member for the county. By the following week MacAleese was totally behind the nationalist campaign. He explained his reticence to plump for one candidate over another by the fact that the Castleblayney meeting had not been held. Now that it had and Healy had been so overwhelmingly selected MacAleese advocated complete support for his candidacy. The editorial was aware just how significant a nationalist victory would be. It would belie forever, it was hoped, the view that there were two national groupings in the island.

It is for Healy at Monaghan, encouraged by the able and trusted leader of the nation, Mr Charles Stewart Parnell, and backed up by the electors of this thoroughly Irish county, to make such a breach in those colonial barriers which have so long politically sundered North and South, that henceforward we may be recognised as but one people contentedly occupying one country. 100

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Magee, 'The Monaghan Election of 1883,' p 152.

¹⁰⁰ People's Advocate, 23 June, 1883, p 5.

And these sentiments, held equally by each side, were crucial to an understanding of the manner in which the contest was viewed. This was more than simply a by-election which might afford one party the opportunity to be victorious over another. Rather, there was, endemic in the struggle between Protestant and Catholic around the drumlins of Monaghan, a realisation that Catholic victory would forever contradict the notion held amongst many people in Britain, especially English Conservatives, that somehow Ulster was not a part of the island of Ireland. And it was this Britishness of the major parties in Ulster that infuriated the nationalists. The Advocate continued that they were struggling against the 'Scotch Liberals' who were centred around the Northern Whig in Belfast. These Liberals were of the Whiggish variety and not friends of the more radical Ulster Liberals like Givan and Dickson. It was the party, the editorial argued, of the Harringtons and the Granvilles, and the Whig was " . . . this journalistic exotic from the Coocaddens, this sweet-scenting flower from the odiferous Coogate."¹⁰¹ Pringle, it was suggested, should be condemned by association, 'Show me a man's associates, and I will tell you what he is.'

There was to be fierce campaigning with a standard contest being distilled into half the time. The nationalists had commenced to put their quart into a pint bottle on Sunday, 17 June at Magheracloone and Carrickmacross. This had required them to hold meetings all over the county on successive nights. In this the presence of so many outside nationalists was extremely important. Harrington had spoken in Magheracloone and Carrickmacross on Sunday, 17 June, and the rest of the entourage arrived in Monaghan the following day where they held a meeting in the county town. On the Tuesday they travelled to Castleblayney for the selection meeting, and after Healy's victory there was a victory meeting in Main Street of the town. Healy spoke at this meeting for the first time in the county, having only arrived that morning.¹⁰² The issue of Home Rule was hardly mentioned, and this was to be a feature of the campaign. Healy had hoped that if he was to underplay the nationalist aspect of his political credo that some of the Presbyterian

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Freeman's Journal, 20 June, 1883, p 5.

tenant farmers who had supported Givan three years earlier would also cast their votes for him. Thomas Sexton tried to emphasise their desire for a non-sectarian campaign when he noted,

they were there to help the Protestant and the Presbyterian as well as the Catholic to have, to enjoy and to hold what fairly and honestly in the judgement of God and the eyes of man does and ought to belong to him. They sought not and they cared not where a man worshipped on the day of rest, but they struggled and they strove that the fruits of the six days of labour would be preserved to him, and that upon the day of rest he might with his family worship his God according to his conscience with an easy and tranquil mind.

103

Apart from small meetings, of which there were many, major meetings were held in all the large centres. On the Thursday evening another meeting was held at Carrickmacross at which Sexton and Healy spoke. While they were addressing the electors Harrington and Small had gone to see MacAleese at the People's Advocate office and a committee had been formed to fight the election campaign.¹⁰⁴ Meetings would be held in Ballytrain, and Ballybay in the south of the county, Monaghan town and Greenan's Cross in central Monaghan, Scotstown in north-west Monaghan, Emyvale in Truagh, Newbliss in the South West, Scotstown and Clones in west Monaghan, and Clontibret in the east which had already hosted meetings in Castleblayney, Magheracloone, and twice in Carrickmacross.¹⁰⁵ This was a considerable number of major political meetings in such a short time. Healy spoke at most of them, and he was supported by Sexton, Small, Dillon, Harrington and Parnell. The appearance of Parnell at the hustings had been a prerequisite placed by Healy before he would consent to resign his Wexford seat. Parnell was billed to speak at the Sunday, 24 June meeting in Ballytrain but he did not turn up. He had been reported as having left London on the preceding day to take the boat to Ireland so that he might be in Monaghan in time for the meeting.¹⁰⁶

103 Ulster Weekly Examiner, 23 June, 1883, cited in Magee, 'Monaghan Election of 1883,' p 153.

104 People's Advocate, 23 June, 1883, p 5.

105 Ibid.

106 London Times, 23 June, 1883, p 9.

The reasons why he did not arrive are unclear, but it has been suggested that he had no valid reason for his delayed departure,

Parnell had promised to speak at it but he remained in England and disappointed TMH and the electorate at a great gathering which TMH had to address without his leader's support. On his return to his hotel from this meeting an open telegram was thrust under TMH's eyes. It ran 'Can you come? The Captain (O'Shea) is away.' It was addressed to Parnell and was probably a duplicated message. To summon Parnell to her from the thick of an important election fight was characteristic of Mrs O'Shea, and alas, it was characteristic of him to go when summoned. 107

Whether this be true or false is difficult to ascertain. Parnell was obviously deeply involved with Mrs O'Shea at this time, and it may be significant that the biography in question was written in sympathy with the anti-Parnellite position after the divorce split. In any case, Parnell's non-appearance at the Ballytrain meeting was a considerable disappointment to both Healy and the nationalists of the county. It was claimed at the time that he had been delayed in London so as to promote an Irish bill in the House of Commons on Monday night, but that arrangements had then been made for another member of the Irish party to remain and permit Parnell to arrive in the county by Monday.¹⁰⁸ This Parnell did, and he arrived in Monaghan town at 6.30 pm the following evening.

This, in fact, was nomination day, Monday, 25 June. The nationalists could claim to have conducted a reasonably successful campaign up to date. Their meetings had been largely attended and the response from the crowds was more than enthusiastic. Their campaign had elicited support from a number of sources outside the constituency. Resolutions had been passed which expressed sympathy with Healy's cause by branches of the Irish National League. In Dromore, county Tyrone, the Parnell branch lauded Healy's efforts and hoped that the nationalist voters of

107 Maev Sullivan, No Man's Man, (Dublin, 1943), pp 33-34.

108 All the Irish papers carried reports of Parnell's arrival.

the county would, "give one grand, stunning and decisive blow to the base faction of West British Liberalism in Ireland,"¹⁰⁹ as also did the Parnell branch of the INL from Belfast,¹¹⁰ the Rosslea INL,¹¹¹ the Blackburn INL¹¹² and the Newcastle-upon-Tyne Parnell Testimonial Committee.¹¹³ In all, over 200 resolutions were received from Irish associations, mostly the INL Branches, in favour of Healy's candidacy.¹¹⁴ But one of the most unusual gestures of support came from a group of Monaghan exiles in London. The chair of the meeting was taken by HGM Porter, and it was reported by several of the members that letters had been received from almost every parish in the county and that there was little doubt but that Healy would be returned.

There was little or no chance for the Liberal candidate, Mr Pringle, of Clones, who was a local merchant as well as a tenant farmer, who had never distinguished himself in local politics. The Conservatives were, however, working enthusiastically for Mr Munro, QC, and several of the local gentry and clergymen were bringing every influence to bear in his favour. The real contest, it was stated, would be between the Conservative and the Parnellite candidates. Mr M H McAlister (Presbyterian) having addressed the meeting proposed, 'That this meeting of Monaghan men resident in London, composed of Presbyterian, Catholic and Church of Ireland men, earnestly call upon the electors of the county Monaghan to discard local and religious prejudices and unite in favour of the representative of the farmers of all the four provinces of Ireland Timothy M Healy Esq, and once and for all prove that Ulster is ready to take her old place in the advanced guard of the Irish people's cause. This resolution was seconded by Mr Gogarty (Roman Catholic), and supported by M H Brooks (Church of Ireland) and passed unanimously.¹¹⁵

The significance of these resolutions, and especially the one cited at length, above, is that it indicates just how important the by-election was viewed by the Parnellite leadership. The National League which had been founded in October, 1882 was almost exclusively a political machine.¹¹⁶

109 People's Advocate, 23 June, 1883, p 1.

110 Ibid.

111 Ibid., 30 June, 1883, p 5.

112 Ibid., 23 June, 1883, p 1.

113 Ibid., 30 June, 1883, p 5.

114 London Times, 27 June, 1883, p 12.

115 Ibid.

116 O'Brien, Parnell and His Party, pp 126-133.

This bombardment of the press by small groups in England and at home was good political tactics, and it demonstrates just how effective Parnell's machine was becoming. The Monaghan election was obviously one which was seen as crucial by the nationalists because otherwise less effort would have been expended. The London meeting was for consumption at home, and its resolution would hopefully persuade enough Protestants to support Healy. Also, the image of the Irish in Britain had been somewhat tarnished by the Phoenix Park murders and the large-scale dynamite campaign which had been undertaken by Fenian elements in England.

If things looked good for the nationalists, the same could not be said of the Liberal campaign. Pringle had accepted the nomination in Ross' office on Tuesday, 19 June when the Parnellite MPs were addressing a large and enthusiastic crowd of their supporters in the centre of the town. That evening had seen the debacle, from Pringle's point of view, at Castleblayney Chapel. This had left the Liberals less than a week until nomination day to decide whether or not to contest the seat. In fact, they decided that it was essential after the tremendous victory of 1880 for there to be a Liberal alternative on the ballot paper.

The die had already been cast for the Liberals at the Castleblayney meeting. The fact that only four out of 82 representatives supported Pringle's candidature indicated his complete lack of support from the Catholic community. And of these four Pringleites, two were Presbyterians (including the candidate's brother) and the other two were Dean Smollen and P T Donnelly of Clones. The other Clones delegates, James Moore, E Maguire and P Kennedy voted for Healy. During the subsequent campaign a speech was made by the Healyites from the front window of Donnelly's house in the Clones Diamond which indicated that he too had deserted the Liberal ranks.¹¹⁷

Both the Nationalist and the Tory press stressed the futility of a Liberal campaign. On the morning after the Castleblayney meeting the Freeman's Journal carried an editorial to this effect. The writer

¹¹⁷ Northern Standard, 30 June, 1883, p 3.

suggested that the Liberal decline was because Gladstone had stated that the land question had been solved.¹¹⁸ And the same journal three days later claimed that,

Mr Pringle is virtually out of the running. The meanly wretched attempt to cheat Mr Healy out of his due as author of the Healy Calude has been completely defeated. It recoils upon its authors,¹¹⁹ Its engineers are hoist with their own petard.

And two days later it claimed that Pringle would love to resign but having " . . . given himself up to the wire pullers, he is now only a puppet in their hands."¹²⁰

The Nationalists claimed that the hope was that enough Catholics would back the Liberals to ensure Munro's election. On the other hand, the Constitutionlists suggested that Pringle had been persuaded to run so as to attract enough Liberal Protestants to his side to elect Healy.¹²¹ A handbill was published which claimed that the advent of a Liberal candidate may fairly be considered to mean the return of the Parnellite nominee.¹²² The paper argued that as Givan received 2,800 votes at the last election to Sir John Leslie's 2,200, and as there were 5,200 registered voters in the county with 2,500 of them Roman Catholics, there were, therefore, only 300 Protestants who voted Liberal at that election. Now as the Catholic clergy had endorsed Healy, then Pringle could only receive 300 votes. The very best that Pringle might hope to do was to attract 500 voters from each side which would leave 1,300 for the Liberals, 1,700 for the Conservatives and 2,000 for Healy. Pringle's withdrawal would then see Munro elected by a small majority over Healy.

The Northern Standard agreed entirely and suggested that as the Protestants would support Munro and the Catholics Healy and as Pringle would receive no more than the 300 Presbyterian Liberal votes in the county thus,

The present election rests entirely in the hands of 300 old Presbyterian Liberals; with them and with them alone rests the

118 Freeman's Journal, 20 June, 1883, p 4.

119 Ibid, 23 June, 1883, p 6.

120 Ibid, 25 June, 1883, p 4.

121 Belfast Newsletter, 23 June, 1883, p 4.

122 Ibid, 19 June, 1883, p 5.

responsibility of sending a Roman Catholic Home Ruler or a Protestant Constitutionalist to represent this loyal county in the British Parliament. Into the present struggle the question of landlord and tenant does not enter . . . The struggle now is between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism, between those who are attached to the Protestant Constitution of Britain and rebels. 123

Here was the crux of the debate from the Protestant point of view. Such rhetoric was very similar to the speeches made by William Wolseley Madden and his brother John at the time of the Disestablishment debate, when the Presbyterians were asked to support the members of the Church of Ireland in their fight to retain the special position of that church.¹²⁴

The attitude of the Northern Standard differed from that of the Belfast Newsletter only in so far as the local journal did not feel that Pringle had been in collusion with the Home Rulers, rather, it suggested that he had been badly advised. It did add, however, that Pringle's conducting agent had stated that if Pringle could get two votes and thus keep Munro out then he would poll them.¹²⁵ Although it mentioned no names the reference was to James B Ross who was the leading Protestant Liberal in the county and as a solicitor represented the party at the revision courts. Surely, the paper argued, the Liberals and the Conservatives could make an electoral pact and perhaps divide the seats.

Pringle's meetings were generally badly attended. He had a number of Liberals come to the county to give him aid in his campaign. His major backer, as with Givan three years earlier, was Thomas Dickson MP for county Tyrone, who was described as seeing himself as 'An Ulster political Warwick.'¹²⁶ He had been present from the start and was at the meeting which attempted to persuade J B Ross to stand prior to Pringle's acceptance of the task. He arrived in the county from London that morning, and remained for most of the campaign. On 23 June it was

123 Northern Standard, 23 June, 1883, p 2.

124 See above, p 190, n 28.

125 Northern Standard, 23 June, 1883, p 2. Letter signed 'A Presbyterian.'

126 Belfast Newsletter, 19 June, 1883, p 5.

announced that J N Richardson¹²⁷ would leave London for Monaghan to augment the Liberal campaign.¹²⁸ He arrived by Nomination Day and remained throughout the last week of the contest.

The two Members of Parliament were supported by Ross, Clow, Patterson, Ancketill and a number of other local Liberals. In addition, James H Ray, Clow and Patterson requested the support of the Ulster Land Committee, and Samuel Black of Randalstown, James Shaw Brown of Belfast, W J Hurst of Drumaness Mills in mid-Down and Thomas Shillington of Portadown, all prominent in the tenant right movement, were despatched to support Pringle.

He did not always receive a fair hearing and he was often heckled, especially by supporters of Tim Healy. With small numbers of supporters it was often difficult to hold a meeting together. For example, Thomas Sexton claimed that Pringle's Nomination Day meeting in Monaghan town had turned into a Nationalist gathering.¹²⁹ And when James B Ross went to Farney to canvass the Liberal cause he was attacked and had to flee.¹³⁰ Unlike three years earlier almost no clerics were to be seen in his company. The Presbyterian ministers were backing Munro and the Catholic clergy were behind Healy. Even Smollen did not appear upon Liberal platforms. The attitude of the Presbyterian clergy was summed up in a letter sent to the Northern Standard by one of their number. He stated that he was a Liberal but that he would be voting for Munro at the impending election. He continued,

Let me, through you, say to all our people that little importance attaches to the return of any member just now so far as legislation is concerned, as the Government still retains its large working majority; but much importance must be attached to the admission under any circumstances of a man connected by so close a link with the bloody Invincibles to represent us in Parliament.¹³¹

¹²⁷ At the 1880 general election James N. Richardson of Bessbrook had been elected M.P. for county Armagh in the face of three Conservative candidates. He did not recontest one of the Armagh seats in 1885. See, Charlotte F Smyth, James Nicholson Richardson of Bessbrook (London, 1925), Ch VI.

¹²⁸ People's Advocate, 23 June, 1883, p 2.

¹²⁹ People's Advocate, 30 June, 1883, p 2.

¹³⁰ Northern Standard, 30 June, 1883, p 3.

¹³¹ Ibid.

Similarly, the Presbyterian clergy also found a place on the platform at Conservative meetings. Thus at Castleblayney the chair was taken by Rev Moore who noted that he had never addressed a meeting before. He also reminded his hearers that although Pringle was a Presbyterian, Munro had good Presbyterian blood in him.¹³²

During his speeches Pringle generally referred to the tremendous boon which the tenant farmers of Ireland had received from Gladstone. And he reminded them that the Conservatives had always trampled upon the farmers. Gladstone had given the people of Ireland the Land Act and the Healy Clause had been inserted by Sir Charles Russell, the member for Dundalk.¹³³ The contest, from a Liberal point of view was one in which the gratitude of the electors of Monaghan would be put to the test. However, due to Gladstone's statement re the land question, Pringle took pains to point out that he was an Independent Liberal. Nevertheless, his campaign stuttered and stopped without ever really coming to life. Great amusement was caused by the fact that Pringle was a butter merchant. This was especially so with the Healyites, although Parnell's public laughter at the occupation might have filled some of his Cork constituents with consternation. The Nationalists were not alone in their taunts. The Dublin Evening Mail commented upon the election,

Mr Pringle, who stands in much the same relation to his opponents as oleomargarine does to butter, was explaining his political creed. Not quite so unpalatable as lard, and not so edible as butter, Mr Pringle is the manufactured compound of both. 134

Pringle's other difficulty was that he was widely reported to be a poor speaker. When Healy first heard him address a meeting he soon left expressing the hope, "that some old woman would take that baby off the platform and nurse him."¹³⁵ Sexton noted,

Poor Mr Pringle (laughter) stood on the platform opposite them and delivered himself of ideas in which no human being could find sense or meaning, and he delivered them in a voice and tone like the North wind in a rain spout. (Cheers and laughter) 136

¹³² London Times, 21 June, 1883, p 8.

¹³³ Ibid, 22 June, 1883, p 7.

¹³⁴ Dublin Evening Mail, 25 June, 1883, p 2.

¹³⁵ Northern Standard, 30 June, 1883, p 2.

¹³⁶ People's Advocate, 30 June, p 2.

But the Nationalist speakers did not confine themselves to attacking the Liberal candidate. Munro received similar treatment to such an extent that the Northern Standard, never known for exhibiting charity towards political adversaries, asked who could imagine the Irish leaders of bye-gone days - the Grattans, the Burkes, the O'Briens, the O'Connells, descending to such disgusting verbiage. It gave the following examples from a Nationalist meeting held in Monaghan town on Nomination Day. Sexton had then stated about the Constitutionalist candidate,

Mr Munro reminds me of an old asthmatic jackdaw delivering a heartbreaking croak over the county. He is an acrobat . . . Today he stands on his feet, tomorrow he stands on his hands, and the next day he stands on his head. It matters not what end of him is exposed to view, as you can gather as much idea of his notions from one as from the other. (loud laughter led by Mr Healy). 137

This meeting was also reported in the People's Advocate, and that journal tended to cut out most of the more offensive remarks made. But the fact that there was no contradiction of the Standard reports suggests that its observations had been accurate.

Munro's campaign met with better results than did Pringle's. He concentrated upon the central and western part of the county. As with the Nationalists he addressed a large number of meetings. His campaign was organised by E S Finnigan, the Conservative agent, and he was reported to be speaking at two or three meetings a day, and filling up the rest of the time in a private canvass. He did not have an elevated group of supporters as either Healy or Pringle. The reason for this may be that the Conservatives realised that if they were to get the Liberal Presbyterian vote there had to be no evidence of Ulster Toryism upon Munro's platforms. Just as the Shirleys and the Leslies were shunned like the plague, so too, were the members of the Irish Conservative party. After all, Munro was described both in his literature and by himself not as a Conservative, but as a Constitutionalist. Finnigan's presence was a tremendous benefit to Munro's campaign because he was probably the best electoral agent in Ulster at the time, and the fact

that he was sent down to Monaghan demonstrates the importance which the Conservative party placed upon the result.

As with the Nationalists, the Conservative party in the county contrived to hold as many meetings as possible. Apart from the first meeting in Monaghan town on 19 June which has been already discussed,¹³⁹ the supporters of Munro managed to cover the entire county with public meetings. On the afternoon of 21 June a large meeting was held in Castleblayney; the following day there was another in Clones; with the candidate travelling to another area where he might expect considerable support that evening, Glasslough. Saturday took Munro to one of the most solidly Protestant areas in the county, Ballybay and Drum. Ballybay, which had been the centre of the linen industry in the county contained a large Protestant population. Although it had a Catholic population in 1881 of 1,056 out of a population of 1,654, a percentage of 63.85%, this does not, of course, reflect the voting strengths of the two groups. Also, the area between Ballybay and Monaghan town was one which was overwhelmingly Protestant. Thus the town was a focus point for the Protestant electors of south Monaghan. The village of Drum, slightly south of Ballybay and lying west of that town is to this day a Protestant and Orange stronghold. The village itself has almost no Catholics among its few inhabitants, whereas the greater Drum area was over two-thirds Protestant. The parishes of Ematris, Aghabog, Currin and Killeevan tucked away in the extreme south-west of the county included at the 1861 Census 13,420 people of whom 7,809 or 58.19% were Roman Catholics. Bearing in mind that the largest Protestant percentage for any barony was Dartree of which these parishes made up more than half (58.01%) as compared with the next most Protestant barony which had a Catholic population of 69.72%, the importance of meetings in such areas was obvious.¹⁴⁰

The day following the Ballybay and Drum meetings was a Sunday. Chapel Gate meetings were already by 1883 very much the vogue within Nationalist politics. Thus Parnell's arrival in the county was to take place on 24 June, and he was to speak at a grand rally at Ballytrain, similarly, Tim Harrington addressed a large Nationalist meeting at

¹³⁹ See above, pp 457-8.

¹⁴⁰ This whole question of Protestant population has been dealt with in depth above in Ch II, pp 50-5.

Greenan's Cross. At both meetings the Catholic clergy were prominent on the platform. The Ballytrain meeting included nine clerics representing the parishes in this very Catholic section of south-east Monaghan. At Greenan's Cross, a Catholic area surrounded by Protestant districts, south-west of the county town between Threemilehouse and Killeevan, the platform party included the three local clerics and P T Donnelly who had been one of Pringle's backers at the Castleblayney meeting.¹⁴¹ This holding of meetings on Sunday was something which was frowned upon by the Protestants of the county, especially the Presbyterians. Givan and Findlater had not held meetings on Sundays during the 1880 campaign, and the decision to do so three years later in effect indicated that the Nationalists felt the Presbyterians unlikely to support them. The benefit which Sunday meetings organised by the Nationalists could hold for the Conservative was not missed. John Munro attended divine service at the parish church in Monaghan town where the clergyman, Venerable Archdeacon Stack,¹⁴²

. . . requested his congregation to note that while the Parnellites were disregarding the sanctity of the Sabbath so far as to stump the county, the Conservative candidate was attending public worship as every Christian ought. 143

The Constitutionalists continued to hold meetings throughout the following week. Monday was Nomination Day and they like the other parties held a rally in the town. That evening the campaign moved to the north with a meeting in Emyvale, and this was followed the following day with a tour of the small towns in the north-west, Smithboro, Ballinode and Scotstown.

There was speculation right up to the presentation of Pringle's papers to the High Sheriff that the Liberals would not contest the county. It had become clear that there was no chance of victory, and indeed, that defeat would be humiliating and bitter. Pringle would be viewed as the man who turned a vote of 2,500 to one of 400-500. In

141 People's Advocate, 20 June, 1883, p 2. Catholics returning from the meeting disrupted a Church of Ireland service at Newbliss. See letter, Rev T B Naylor, in Belfast Newsletter, 27 June, 1883, p 8.

142 Stack was Archdeacon of the diocese and the leading Churchman in county Monaghan. He was also a Deputy Grand Chaplain of the county.

143 Northern Standard, 27th June, 1883, p 1.

fact, the Liberals did not even approach this figure. However, it would be unfair to blame either the candidate or the local Liberals for the debacle. Rather they were to be the losers in a campaign when economic and social factors had lost their relevancy in the face of the religious question. Most Protestants saw the contest in this light, and the voting activities of the Catholic delegates at the Castleblayney meeting indicated that they, too, were of this opinion. The days for such politics as those which debated past records of the politicians were gone, and the Liberals were the ultimate losers. The actions of the government did not endear the party to the Catholic voters, whilst the antipathy which almost all Protestants felt for James B Ross was not a factor which would induce many of them to back Pringle. For example, when the Liberals arrived in Drum on Saturday, 24 June to hold a meeting they were almost unable to hold a meeting at all due to the antipathy which existed towards 'some of Pringle's principal supporters.' It was only after a local resident interceded that they got a hearing. And he later found it expedient to write to the Northern Standard and point out that he was not a Liberal but only wished to let Pringle have a fair hearing.¹⁴⁴

It is difficult to understand why Pringle did not retire before Nomination Day. The general impression given in both the Nationalist and Conservative press was that he was badly advised. Each suggested that he remained in the race to ensure the defeat of their candidate. On 29 June the Dublin Evening Mail carried a report that Thomas Dickson had informed Gladstone that Pringle had absolutely no chance of success and the leader of his party now wished him to retire gracefully.¹⁴⁵ It attributed this statement to the Belfast Newsletter, but that journal replied the next day that the report had been carried in the Healyite evening paper in Belfast.¹⁴⁶ The Freeman similarly hinted that Pringle would retire in an editorial printed on 25 June, which also claimed that the Whigs and the Tories would then unite to fight Healy. It added that Pringle would love to retire, "But, having given himself up to the wire

¹⁴⁴ Northern Standard, 7 July, 1883, p 3.

¹⁴⁵ Dublin Evening Mail, 29 June, 1883, p 3.

¹⁴⁶ Belfast Newsletter, 30 June, 1883, p 5.

pullers, he is now only a puppet in their hands."¹⁴⁷ This was the feeling expressed by the major victim of a Liberal campaign. At a meeting in Clones on 21 June, Munro stated that Pringle was an honest tool in dishonest hands.¹⁴⁸

Nomination took place at 1.00 pm at the Court House, Monaghan town. Healy was proposed by George Remmick, who was a member of the Church of Ireland as the Freeman's Journal was quick to point out. The Freeman also claimed that a number of Healy's assentors were Presbyterian tenant farmers.¹⁴⁹ There appeared to be, in fact, three Presbyterian assentors to Healy's nomination; William Andrew Nesbitt of Derryallery, Hugh Martin and William Crumley, both from Monaghan town. Remmick was a well known Protestant nationalist in the Barony of Farney, being active in all the popular causes and holding the post of treasurer of the Carrickmacross branch of the Irish National Land League.¹⁵⁰ The remainder of Healy's assentors were Catholics. His seconder was Very Reverend Charles Canon McCluskey, Parish Priest of Drumillard, whilst Canon Hoey was the first of his assentors. Of the rest of those mentioned as seconders, four came from Ballybay, three from Castleblayney, nine from Carrickmacross and only one from Monaghan.¹⁵¹ This indicated the manner in which the candidacy was set in motion. The entire impetus for Healy's campaign came from the south-east of the county, and it was there that he could be expected to receive his greatest support. However, it was usual to ensure that the names of those who appeared in the press as supporting a candidacy were evenly spread throughout the county as a counterguard against a charge of regionalism against a candidate.

Those who were involved in Munro's campaign at its inception were, unlike the Nationalists, from all parts of the county. Munro's two proposers were Andrew Allen Murray-Ker of Newbliss House and Whitney Upton Moutray of Fort Singleton.¹⁵² His seconders were Robert Graham

¹⁴⁷ Freeman's Journal, 25 June, 1883, p 4.

¹⁴⁸ Northern Standard, 23 June, 1883, p 3.

¹⁴⁹ Freeman's Journal, 26 June, 1883, p 4.

¹⁵⁰ PRONI D3531/B/3 Shirley Papers, undated printed handbill.

¹⁵¹ People's Advocate, 30 June, 1883, p 3.

¹⁵² For information on Ker and Moutray see above, Ch I, passim.

of Monaghan and Thomas Dunn of Crappagh. In addition, there were sixteen assentors. These were resident in all parts of the county with the exception of Farney, and there were nine Presbyterians, six Episcopalians and one Methodist.¹⁵³ It was also reported that a number of these had voted Liberal in the 1880 election.¹⁵⁴

Pringle's papers were signed by Martin Napoleon Wall of Clones, and seconded by Richard J Blakely. There were eight assentors. With the exception of William Ancketill, they all appear to have been Presbyterian tenant farmers. Just as Munro found it expedient not to have any of the major landowners' names appear upon his papers, Pringle kept Ross off his.

After the papers had been received, the respective supporters gathered to hear their favourites speak. The Nationalist meeting was held in Church Square at 4.00 pm with the editor of the People's Advocate, Daniel MacAleese, in the chair. An impressive platform party included sixteen Catholic clerics, including Very Reverend Canon McGlone, the President of St Macartin's College in the town. MacAleese spent most of his opening speech in an attack upon the Liberal candidate. Mr Healy, he claimed, had resigned his seat for Wexford to, " . . . aid them in throwing off the yoke of an accursed system of Liberalism, a system that would keep them forever in the bonds of slavery."¹⁵⁵ He continued that it was time to show the Liberals that the bone and sinew of Catholic Ireland would be dragged no longer after a party that used but never aided them. MacAleese then attacked Thomas Dickson and Thomas McKnight, the editor of the Northern Whig. Lastly, he reminded his listeners that Owen Roe O'Neill had defeated a Scot by the name of Munro at the battle of Benburb.

MacAleese was followed by Jeremiah Jordon from Enniskillen. He was an erstwhile Protestant Liberal, being a member of a prominent Methodist family from Fermanagh. He had become involved in the Land League, and whereas most Liberals evolved into Unionists, he was one of

¹⁵³ People's Advocate, 30 June, 1883, p 3.

¹⁵⁴ Belfast Newsletter, 26 June, 1883, p 8.

¹⁵⁵ People's Advocate, 30 June, 1883, p 2.

the few who became a Nationalist.¹⁵⁶ Jordan spoke only briefly and he was followed by Thomas Sexton. Sexton, like MacAleese, kept most of his rancour for Pringle¹⁵⁷ and he hardly mentioned Munro at all. Not so when Healy came to the rostrum. He likened Munro and Pringle to a Punch and Judy show, adding that Munro would have to be Punch as hanging was in his family. This was an allusion to the fact that Munro's great grandfather was Harry Munro who had led the Hearts of Down during the '98 Rebellion and had been hanged in the square in Lisburn for his pains. Whether or not this was true, it is an unusual piece of family history for a Nationalist MP to cast up against anyone. Healy also stated that Munro did not know whether he was a Liberal or a Tory, a Presbyterian or a member of the Church of Ireland. These charges arose from a letter which had appeared in the People's Advocate on the preceding Saturday. A correspondent, signing himself 'An Armagh Covenanter' had claimed that Munro was a descendant of Harry Munro, and that until recently his family had been respected members of the Presbyterian Church.¹⁵⁸ How authentic this letter was is difficult to ascertain, but it would be surprising if an Armagh Presbyterian was unaware that Munro was an Episcopalian, or that he was unmarried. The claim that Munro used to be a Whig was made in the Freeman's Journal on 22 June.¹⁵⁹

Healy's speech continued with a long simile about Munro being a clown in a circus which elicited much laughter and cheering from his audience. After he had finished, Tim Harrington took over and after reminding his hearers that they could vote for only one man and there should be only one 'X' upon the ballot paper, he was followed by Healy and Sexton who proposed a vote of thanks to MacAleese. The meeting had

156 Jeremiah Jordan was an Enniskillen Methodist, who had been a Poor Law Guardian in that town. His radical views led him eventually to the Land League. He sat as a Nationalist for West Clare, 1885-92; was defeated as an anti-Pite in Fermanagh South in 1892; won Meath South in 1893 but lost it again to the Parnellites in 1895. He represented Fermanagh south from 1895 until his death in 1910.

157 People's Advocate, 30 June, 1883, p 2.

158 Ibid, 23 June, 1883, p 1.

159 Freeman's Journal, 22 June, 1883, p 4.

been largely attended, and among his hearers was Bishop Donnelly who remained in the background.¹⁶⁰

Pringle's meeting had not gone well, and he had had so few supporters that the whole affair had turned into a fiasco with the Nationalist candidate obtaining more benefit from the assembly than the Liberal. Munro's crowd was more receptive. As with all his other meetings, the chair was taken by a tenant farmer, John Black from Dromore. Munro opened by praising the tenant farmers and reminded the people that he was the son of a tenant farmer, and that he had come to Monaghan at the request of his friend, Thomas Dunn of Newbliss, who had asked him to contest the seat after Healy had been the sole candidate for five days. This, he added, he consented to do.¹⁶¹ Dunn had been reported as chairing the first meeting of tenant farmers to select a Conservative candidate. He was a well known local Orangeman from Doohat, and he had held the post of District Secretary of Dartry District Lodge during the 1870s.¹⁶² This suggests that Munro was approached by the Orangemen to contest the seat. However, it is possible that Dunn was operating independently because an appeal from the Orangemen would probably have come through George Knight with whom Munro had worked on a number of occasions. It does, in any case, underline the fact that Munro was not the nominee of the local magnates.

Having stated that he was the second to come into the field, Munro suggested that it was unfair of Pringle to claim that he should retire so as not to split the anti-Nationalist vote. Rather, it was Pringle's duty to quit the field. This argument was underlined by the reiteration of the voting information of the last contest which indicated that Pringle would cost the Protestant tenant farmers the election. This would ensure the return of Healy. Munro pointed out that the Nationalists had decided it was expedient to come to Monaghan and pose as the tenants' friend. Their main platform was, however, national independence, and he linked Healy through implication with Rossa and Devoy in America,

¹⁶⁰ Donnelly's Diary, 25 June, 1883.

¹⁶¹ Northern Standard, 30 June, 1883, p 4.

¹⁶² County Minutes each year reprinted the officers of each lodge and district lodge. Dunn was a prominent Orangeman in the Newbliss area.

whose only motivating force was hatred of England. This was the clique which would be returned to power with Healy. It was not a battle for the tenant farmers, but one for the dynamiting of buildings, the houghing of cattle and the murder of innocent men.

. . . these were the excitements which were required to loosen the purse strings of the Red Republicans. (Cheers). Justice to the tenant farmer was but a catchpenny cry . . . Peace, contentment, harmony of the different classes in the community was no part of the Nationalists' programme . . . Events were marching on with startling rapidity. Nationalism, Socialism, Communism, Nihilism - these were the watchwords to bands of desperadoes to whom nothing was sacred. There was a time in the history of this county when the reviler of the Pope would not have been allowed to set his foot on Catholic soil. Now the great head of the Church could be called an idiot with impunity. 163

This bracketing of the Nationalists with every politically unpopular movement in Europe (unpopular in the eyes of conservative Irish peasants) was more to frighten the Catholics away from Healy than to strengthen the resolve of the Protestant tenant farmers. It picked upon a letter which had appeared on the back page of the Northern Standard the previous Saturday. Signed 'A Monaghan Catholic' it had stated that although a Liberal and a supporter of the principle of Home Rule, the writer could not bear to see his country's welfare placed in the hands of Mr Healy's gang of reformers. It continued,

That Mr Parnell has done much for the country I admit but that gentleman is being driven too far by his party, and I am sorry for it. True Liberals feel ashamed of their party just now, and would hail with delight a more moderate class of men who . . . would not allow themselves to be dragged into Radicalism and Communism . . . Men who seek, and no doubt obtain, advice from men like Victor Hugo and other known characters on the Continent are not fit to represent us . . . We love liberty, but liberty of such a kind as that recommended by the French Commune. 'God save Ireland from men of this class' should be the cry of every Irishman today. Let the voters of Monaghan chose for themselves an MP, and send back this son of an agent to his post office duties¹⁶⁴ in Waterford.

This letter had caused a considerable storm, as it suggested that Catholics were not safe in the hands of such radicals as Healy. If it

163 Northern Standard, 30 June, 1883, p 4.

164 Ibid, 23 June, 1883, p 4.

was to be believed that Healy and his companions were tainted with French anti-clericalism, then this, coupled with his reaction to the Papal letter regarding the Parnell Tribute, would have seriously weakened his position amongst the socially conservative Catholics in the county.

Such a threat did the People's Advocate view the sentiments contained in 'a Monaghan Catholic's' letter that they printed a reply on the front page of that journal the following week. This letter, signed by 'A Loyal Elector' took 'Monaghan Catholic' to task over his claim that the Healyites were of a similar ilk to Victor Hugo. He was clearly not certain that there was indeed a Monaghan Catholic behind the Northern Standard letter. 'Elector' agreed that Ireland should be saved from such as the Communists, but he also suggested that it faced a threat from such 'mongrel Catholics' as he. Monaghan had nothing to do with Hugo, Garibaldi and others, but such as the Monaghan 'Catholic' were a present threat.¹⁶⁵ Thus did the Advocate react to the letter in the Standard which claimed that Healy was a radical and unsuitable for the position of Member of Parliament for a Catholic constituency. It is likely that both 'A Monaghan Catholic' and 'A Loyal Elector' were figments of the imaginations of the respective editors, Swan of the Northern Standard and MacAleese of the People's Advocate. Nevertheless, the letters indicate the political stance of each.

Parnell arrived in Monaghan at 6.30 pm somewhat later than anticipated and missed the Nationalist meeting in the Church Square. When he alighted from the train he was met by a large crowd which followed him to Healy's committee rooms. When he arrived there he made a short impromptu speech. Praising the electors for backing Healy he said that he was sure that they would record a victory at the polls, ". . . and that for him (Healy) will be reserved the proud boast of having been the first to place the banner in the remote North (Cheers).¹⁶⁶ The rest of the speech was of little import and it was followed by Thomas Sexton who also addressed the crowd briefly. After the presentation of a bouquet of flowers to Parnell and some cheering, the crowd dispersed.

¹⁶⁵ People's Advocate, 30 June, 1883, p 1.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

It was claimed by the Freeman's Journal that after the meeting Parnell and Sexton met Bishop Donnelly to discuss the impending contest¹⁶⁷ and that the bishop agreed to endorse Healy.

Donnelly noted in his diary that he had heard Healy speak that afternoon although there is no report in any of the newspapers that his presence was noted. Thus it would appear likely that he watched the meeting in private and that he then met Parnell after the later meeting. He did not record the meeting in his diary, but this does not prove that it did not occur. If it was as secretive as the report suggests then it is not disproved that there should be no entry in the diary. It might seem peculiar that Donnelly did not record the meeting, but then he often left events unrecorded when he was too busy to fully enter up his diary. It would seem certain that there would have been some audience, if only to clear up any lingering doubts which Healy's outburst about the Parnell Tribute might have caused. As Donnelly noted in a letter to Tobias Kirby, the Rector of the Irish College at Rome,

Healy was unanimously selected as candidate by the Monaghan Catholic convention. I demanded from him a public retraction of his remark concerning the Propaganda circular, which he gave, after some hesitation, at a public meeting, on 24 June. With that, there might have been serious consequences had I opposed him. The Catholic people of Clogher are loyal to Rome, but insist on their freedom of political agents. 168

There was no public endorsement of Healy by Donnelly, but the fact that he did not oppose him was a clear indication to the older members of the flock that there had been a rapprochement between Parnellism and clericalism in the diocese.¹⁶⁹ However, it must be noted that Donnelly overstates the effect which he could have had upon the people of the diocese. If he had wanted to stop Healy then the time to have done it would have been at the meeting in Castleblayney Chapel, which the Bishop referred to as a Catholic convention. At that meeting of the Representative body of the 127 delegates there had been 28 Catholic clerics, and they would have been in a stronger position than once Healy had had the nomination conferred upon him. In fact, it is unlikely that Donnelly

¹⁶⁷ Freeman's Journal, 26 June, 1883, p 4.

¹⁶⁸ Emmet Larkin, The Roman Catholic Church and the Creation of the Modern Irish State, 1878-1886, (Philadelphia, 1975), p 191.

¹⁶⁹ Donnelly's claim that Healy publicly renounced his statements over the Pope's letter is not backed up by any of the journals, either Catholic or Protestant. There were two meetings that day; Harrington spoke at Greenan's Cross, and Healy at Ballytrain.

could have wielded enough support at any stage to stop Healy contesting the county. The reality of the situation was more that if he had strongly denounced Healy then enough of the older and more conservative Catholics might have abstained and thus permitted Munro to win the election.

The head of the Irish Party had been expected to arrive in Monaghan on Saturday night or Sunday morning. Because he was detained, possibly at O'Shea's, he missed two of the major meetings, Ballytrain on Sunday, and Monaghan town on Monday. Thus when he arrived he surprised Healy and the others by declaring that he intended remaining until the declaration of the poll. So interested did he become in the contest that he had himself nominated as one of the counters of votes.¹⁷⁰ He also spoke at a number of venues. The Nationalists had arranged a full programme of meetings. On the Tuesday evening there was a large meeting in Emyvale in north Monaghan at which Parnell and Healy spoke. This was the first time that Healy had addressed a meeting in that part of the county. The chair was occupied by the Parish Priest, Rev D O'Connor. Parnell reminded his audience that he had spoken in Cavan in 1878.¹⁷¹ He promised his hearers that if Healy was returned he would get them even greater concessions; that the Sub-Commissioners were ignoring the 'Healy Clause,' and that if it was worked the tenants of Ireland would receive a reduction of around 50%. This was a particular claim which would be questioned by the Tories during the last week.

Following the Emyvale meeting there were two large meetings the following day. The first, and smaller of the two was held at Scotstown, the scene of the famous Land League meeting in 1881. It was also a town which had seen some very enthusiastic boycotting, and had been a centre of Fenianism just over a decade before.¹⁷² The other rally had been organised for Castleblayney which was on the verge of Farney. It was the third largest town in the county and it marked the boundary where Protestant tenant farmers virtually ceased and the start of the Barony of Farney which was overwhelmingly Catholic.

¹⁷⁰ London Times, 30 June, 1883, p 10.

¹⁷¹ London Times, 27 June, 1883, p 12.

¹⁷² See above, pp 127-8.

The meeting was chaired by Canon Hoey who spoke in kindly terms of the other two candidates. Of Pringle he said that he was a man who minded his own business and who allowed others to mind theirs, whilst he applauded Munro's ability at the bar and claimed that he was a man whom he knew personally, " . . . to be an honour to the body to which he belonged. He had by energy and great ability risen to his present position at the Bar, and he trusted he might raise himself higher,"¹⁷³ but he still hoped that he would not be elected. The third representative was one chosen by Mr Parnell. A circular had been disseminated throughout the county purporting to be signed by a Catholic cleric, but Healy was not going forward to represent the Catholics but 'the wrongs of Ireland.'

It was not usual for chairmen of political meetings to commence the proceedings by eulogising the opposition. There had been a fair degree of acrimony in the campaign as noted above, and Hoey's charitable remarks might not have been expected. It is possible that Hoey, recognising that there would be a number of Protestants in the crowd had decided to make the remarks for their benefit. Certainly, the old-fashioned Presbyterian Liberals whom Healy hoped to attract to his standard were fairly common in the Mullish, Clontibret, Muckno area, and Castleblayney was one town where such sentiments about Pringle would be appreciated. The praise of Munro, which had much greater substance was all the more unusual. In fact, Munro had previously mentioned Hoey in glowing terms. At a Conservative meeting in Clones he had stated that he was disappointed that the Castleblayney Parish Priest was in favour of the Nationalist candidate as he was a scholar and a gentleman.¹⁷⁴

Parnell opened his address by apologising for his lack of preparedness as he was due to speak at Scotstown that evening and the Castleblayney meeting was only organised at the last moment. As Parnell had spoken at Emyvale the previous night this meant that he was travelling from north Monaghan to south Monaghan and back again. His meeting in Castleblayney was a clear attempt to make amends for not appearing at Ballytrain on the Sunday. The head of the Irish Party stated that there had never been so crucial an election in his eight years in national politics.

¹⁷³ People's Advocate, 30 June, 1883, p 1.

¹⁷⁴ Northern Standard, 23 June, 1883, p 3.

Upon this contest, he claimed, rested the reopening of the land question, and the assertion that the north was as determined as the south and west to reopen it.

Parnell continued in a similar way, stating that there would be a reintroduction of the principle behind the Healy Clause which had been negated by the House of Lords, and that eventually the tenants would own their holdings. Support for an independent Irish Party was essential and there was little to choose between Munro and Pringle. Just because Pringle was able to scrape the butter out of a tub did not mean that he would be a good MP. Munro was here as a Tory Democrat, ". . . and he has sent his friends, the landlords, into the rabbit burrows for the occasion of his election, lest they might compromise him by rubbing their shoulders against him."¹⁷⁵ Finally he stated that the improvements which were evident everywhere should not be subject to increased rent, and the people of Monaghan had a great opportunity as the English Government, the English Conservative party and the whole world were watching them. Parnell then sat down without mentioning Home Rule, just as Butt had done twelve years earlier. John Madden was still the only Irishman to have addressed a meeting of Monaghan electors with the basic principle of Home Rule and a national parliament as the central issue.

After the Castleblayney meeting the entourage travelled back to the north of the county for the Scotstown gathering that night. From thence they travelled to the west of the county to Clones. Just as there had been a fair at Castleblayney on Wednesday, fairday in Clones was a Friday. And as a fair day was certain to ensure that the local town would be filled with people from the outlying districts, each candidate endeavoured to have a meeting in the fairtown. Thus at Castleblayney and at Clones, as with Monaghan town on Nomination Day, each of the candidates held a meeting for his respective supporters. In Clones the Conservatives met in the Roundtower Schoolhouse, but at the other venues that week, and at Ballybay the previous Saturday, each meeting was held in the main street. Thus there was considerable heckling of the one candidate by the supporters of the other. This being the case, it is obvious that the candidate with the fewest supporters, Pringle, would

¹⁷⁵ People's Advocate, 30 June, 1883, p 1.

come off the worst.¹⁷⁶ Similarly, the Conservatives' decision to hold their Clones meeting in the schoolroom might suggest that they could expect to be in a decided minority in the street. But there was no physical assault as the press noted. The contest was reported to be the quietest ever contested in the county. This is difficult to explain, as with so much at stake for the two major parties, and the Liberals fighting for their very existence, one might have expected a certain degree of violent collision between the respective parties.

The Conservative campaign from Nomination Day to Polling Day was a success. With the help of E S Finnigan the Tories were much better organised so that the county was traversed in a continuous movement, stopping in each of the major towns on the way. The Liberals were able to organise their cavalcade throughout the county more easily because of their smaller numbers. Nevertheless, they were unhappy with the way in which the campaign was organised; as ever they were without any sizeable number of supporters in the localities and were thus at a double disadvantage as all organisation had to be carried out from afar. Pringle, however, did have the support of a number of imported Liberals and tenant righters. Richardson had arrived from London and he spoke at a number of meetings, principally in Clones and Castleblayney, and at Clones he pointed out that he was a Liberal but always voted against his party when he felt that the interests of his constituents required it, and no doubt Pringle would do the same.¹⁷⁷ Nevertheless, even with the aid of such as Dickson, who had claimed that it was impossible to be a true Presbyterian and a Conservative at one of the meetings,¹⁷⁸ it was increasingly impossible for the Liberal to even make himself heard. And the press of the other two candidates only mentioned the Liberal in the context of reporting that he was completely out of the running. Indeed, as late as Friday, 29 June, reports were carried in the press that

176 For example, at the Clones meeting the Liberals pulled up in a brake outside Goff's Hotel to address the meeting. There were so many interruptions that the meeting had to be abandoned and the men who were to have spoken contented themselves with passing copies of their speeches to the members of the press. See Belfast Newsletter, 28 June, 1883, p 6.

177 Charlotte F Smith, James Nicholson Richardson of Bessbrook, (London, 1925), pp 70-71.

178 This suggestion was attacked by Rev. John Steen, Presbyterian minister at Drum during a Conservative meeting in that village.

Pringle would announce his retirement before polling commenced. It was reported that the impetus for such a move came from Gladstone who had been informed by Dickson that Pringle would be annihilated at the polls.¹⁷⁹ This information cheered the Conservatives who were sure that they would be victorious if there was a two man fight. Similarly, the Healyites were considerably apprehensive when it was learned that Pringle would retire. As it was, Pringle did not retire even in the face of a reported desire by Dickson that he do so and ensure that the Protestant vote be not split. At this stage in the campaign, with so much personal invective unleashed upon the Liberals by Healy and his supporters, there can be little doubt that the Liberals would have hoped that their supporters would have voted for Munro. However, it was not to be, and the Liberal candidate did contest the seat.

Munro's campaign was conducted almost exclusively by Monaghan men. Only his friend, John McKane LL.D., from Dublin was an outsider. McKane was a lawyer and an associate of Munro's. He was a Presbyterian and from the tenor of his speeches he was probably an Orangeman. He gave a number of stirring addresses in which he took issue with Dickson, himself an elder in the Presbyterian church, that a Presbyterian could not be a Conservative. Rather, he described himself as a 'True Blue Presbyterian.' His position was clearly to strengthen Munro's appeal to the Presbyterians. The fact that he was an Episcopalian had been used against him by the Nationalists, especially the claim that he was a renegade to Presbyterianism. Fortunately, Munro was able to persuade a number of Presbyterian clergy onto his platforms. At the first meeting in Castleblayney he had Rev Moore, at Emyvale a vote of confidence in his candidacy was proposed by Rev P B White, a Presbyterian, and seconded by Rev J W Taylor, of the Church of Ireland. At Ballinode a long speech was made by Rev Graham, who not only called upon all Presbyterians to support Munro but also stated that he was brought up in the same area as the candidate and he could assert that the Munros were all Presbyterian, although some of them had been fortunate enough to marry Church of Ireland wives.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁹ Belfast Newsletter, 29 June, 1883, p 5.

¹⁸⁰ Northern Standard, 30 June, 1883, p 3.

As well as the Presbyterian clergy Munro also had a large number of Church of Ireland ministers aiding his cause. This was not uncommon, as the Episcopalian clergy had been identified with Conservative politics and the Orange Order for some time. It was the allegiance of the Presbyterians which was all important. The Presbyterian electors, after all, were supposed to hold the key to victory. They were an independent people, but would obviously take the views of their clergy into consideration. To this end, a letter appeared in the Belfast Newsletter from Rev W Harvey, a Presbyterian minister from Maryport, England. He was an uncle of Munro's, the son of Rev James Harvey of Bedrock, county Armagh who had been referred to before in the campaign. Harvey claimed that the tenant farmers were being used to further the cause of an independent Ireland. Now that the revolver, the dynamite and the assassins' knife had failed, the plan was to send as many Home Rulers to parliament as possible. Surely the Presbyterians would not fall for such a ploy, and surely Pringle would not lend himself to it. Thus the Liberals and Conservatives must unite and return Munro. Of the Presbyterian clergy he asked; 'throw your influence into the fray.' Although generally Presbyterians do not take sides in political disputes, now was not such a time. It was essential that England be shown that the Presbyterians wanted nothing of the Parnellites. The Liberals and Conservatives should now unite behind Munro, the son of a tenant farmer and a true friend of that class.¹⁸¹

The final week of Munro's campaign concentrated upon the need for a united front against a common enemy. Time and again the voting figures of the 1880 election were discussed and it was predicted, with unerring accuracy, that Pringle would receive at most 300 votes. Similarly, the Conservatives fought against claims that their candidate was a renegade to both Liberalism and Presbyterianism, and that he was using the constituency simply to further his legal career. In fact they claimed that as Munro had been Law Advisor to Dublin Castle for years, he could expect greater advancement if the Tories returned to power at the next general election. The Monaghan candidacy was no help to his career, and indeed,

¹⁸¹ Belfast Newsletter, 28 June, 1883, p 6.

Such charges came well from Mr Sexton, who is the paid representative of half starved Sligo, from Mr Parnell, whose begging box is at this moment being circulated round every village and parish in Ireland, or from Mr Healy for whom Wexford subscribed her shillings. 182

The Conservatives also stressed that Healy was a Nationalist, something which was not always clear from his speeches and those of his supporters. As Munro put it at Ballybay,

They are coming forward to establish an Irish Republic and looking forward to a great millenium of plunder. The members of this strolling band generally set their language to the tunes they wish to play. In one place it is the green flag, national and independent, and God save Ireland. This is the tune they generally play in the South; but when they come to the Northern province, it is nothing but the tenant farmer and the tenant farmer's rights. 183

Polling was set for Saturday, 30 June. There were to be a number of polling places. Monaghan town and Carrickmacross had three stations whilst Ballybay, Castleblayney, Clones and Newbliss each had two. Other places where the people could record their votes were Ballytrain, Clontibret, Rockcorry, Emyvale, Glasslough and Scotstown. In all, there were thirty booths all of which would need to be manned by representatives of the various candidates.¹⁸⁴ The Tories and the Nationalists were able to muster a full compliment of workers to ensure that their cause did not suffer from malpractice.

The press was full of predictions as to the probable outcome, although everyone agreed that Healy was the strong favourite. The London Times¹⁸⁵ noted that there were 5,283 voters on the electoral roll, 2,500 of Catholics and 2,783 Protestants, about 5,000 would actually vote and suggested that 83 more Protestants than Catholics would turn out. This would mean perhaps 2,541 Protestants and 2,458 Catholics. The article added that 300 Protestants would not vote Conservative so Healy would win. The Times prediction, then, was Healy 2,458; Munro 2,241; and Pringle 300. Of the others, the People's Advocate and the Northern

182 Dublin Evening Mail, 23 June, 1883, p 2.

183 Northern Standard, 30 June, 1883, p 3.

184 Notice of Polling Stations, published in People's Advocate, 30 June, 1883, p 4.

185 London Times, 30 June, 1883, p 10.

Standard made no predictions. The Advocate appealed for all its readers to vote for Healy and to arrive at the polls early. The paper printed a copy of the ballot paper with the three names upon it and an 'X' beside Healy's name. It also counselled the people to remember that they had only one vote as the other seat was not being contested. The Standard had no such advice. Its editorial attacked Parnell for placing his candidate before the electors and the Liberals, like the Parnellites, for bringing outsiders into the county to fight the election. The leader finished with the claim that the Catholics of Monaghan would resent this intrusion into their political affairs by outsiders, notwithstanding the 'ominous silence of Bishop Donnelly.'¹⁸⁶ However, having claimed that Healy would win if Pringle remained in the contest there was little that the Standard could now say. There was less enthusiasm in the June 30 issue of the Standard than there was in its nationalist counterpart, the People's Advocate. Whether its worst fears would be realised would be discovered on Monday.

The actual polling proved to be a quiet affair. There was neither riot nor intimidation. The two major parties had enough supporters at the booths to ensure that abuses did not take place. However, on the morning of the election two separate handbills were put out throughout the county. The first was supposed to have been produced by the Liberals and was to the effect that Pringle had decided to withdraw. This would have aided the Tories, and the suggestion that it was supporters of Munro who had printed the bill in an effort to get otherwise Protestant Liberal votes for their candidate.¹⁸⁷ The other bill purported to come from the National camp and was headed, 'To Hell with the Queen.' This again was an attempt to disgust Liberals with the Nationalists in the hope that they would turn towards Munro.¹⁸⁸ These ploys have been suggested to have contributed to Pringle's defeat, but it had been stated all along that there were only 300 Protestant Liberal votes in the county and that they would go Liberal no matter who was the

¹⁸⁶ Northern Standard, 30 June, 1883, p 2.

¹⁸⁷ T McKnight, Ulster As It Is, Vol II, (London, 1896), p 35.

¹⁸⁸ Healy referred to this handbill in his victory speech after the declaration of the poll, in People's Advocate, 7 July, 1883, p 2.

Conservative candidate. When the votes were tallied it was discovered that Pringle had, in fact, received 270 votes, so there can be little question of their playing a part in the eventual outcome.

No definite predictions were forthcoming from the journals - all reported a close contest with the result resting on a knife's edge. Generally they suggested that their particular favourite would just scrape home. Of one result all newspapers were assured, and that was that the Liberals would be all but wiped out. Their basis of support had been demonstrated during the campaign to be almost completely eroded. There was no longer an anti-Tory alliance, Ireland had moved towards the Nationalist/Unionist divide into which the province of Ulster had been sucked. The Liberals would shortly have to choose where they stood. The vast majority of the party's support had already chosen; that is the Catholic population was now firmly within the Nationalist camp. The Tories, for their part, had always been the party of Queen and Empire and would clearly be the major force within any anti-Nationalist alliance. The dilemma of the Protestant Liberals, generally Presbyterian, would be solved by 1885.

The counting took place on the morning of Monday. July 2. It was presided over by the High Sheriff, Sir John Leslie, who acted as Returning Officer, assisted by the Sub-Sheriff, W H Swann, the Proprietor of the Northern Standard. The government assessor was George Hill Smith BL. Before the count could get started there was a dispute over the returns from two polling stations, Ballytrain and Monaghan Number 3, due to the official papers not being available. In fact, they had been locked inside the ballot boxes concerned, but they were supposed to be handed in to the returning officer before the boxes were opened. There was no request that the result be set aside, and this was only a ploy to have the Ballytrain votes discountenanced as it would record a large majority for the Nationalists.

When the votes were totalled it was discovered that Healy had received a majority of the votes cast. The result was,

Healy (Nationalist)	2,376	
Munro (Conservative)	2,011	
Pringle (Liberal)	270	189

189 Initially Healy's total was announced as 2,276. The mistake was noticed by Parnell and it was rectified. Munro did not describe himself as a Conservative but as a Constitutionalist. See People's Advocate, and Northern Standard, 7 July, 1883.

This was of considerable importance to both the Liberals and the Nationalists, as the former could claim that they had not cost the opponents of Parnell in the county the election. Similarly, Healy could claim that the result indicated that even in a three cornered fight he had been elected by a simple majority. The official result does not give any indication of who voted for each of the candidates. This can be guessed at, however, by looking at the tally reports from the various candidates which were discussed in the newspapers.

There was a total of 5,283 voters upon the electoral register at the beginning of the year according to the Freeman's Journal.¹⁹⁰ This figure had to be adjusted downwards 10% because of death and removal from the constituency which gave a total of 4,750 which was equally divided between Protestant and Catholic. This being the case, there were 2,375 of each group. However, this would mean that only one Catholic did not vote for Tim Healy which is unlikely, and does not take into consideration the spoilt votes. The Belfast Newsletter suggested that there were 2,780 Protestants and 2,500 Catholics on the register, which gives a total electorate of 5,380.¹⁹¹ This difference of 280 was almost the same as the number of votes cast for Pringle. Thus if the Liberal Protestant vote was to be subtracted from the Protestant total it gives an identical number of Nationalist and Conservative supporters. There were, then, 124 Catholics who did not vote. The Tories, however, somehow lost 489 votes. And that question was one which troubled the local Conservatives when the postmortems were being conducted after the election.

There were a number of spoilt votes for each of the candidates. That is, votes which were marked wrongly by their supporters but whose party must have been evident. It must have been possible for the scrutineers to examine each spoilt vote and record the number or name upon it. There were 96 spoilt votes recorded at the election which broke down as follows: Pringle - 6, Healy - 20, and Munro - 70.¹⁹²

¹⁹⁰ Freeman's Journal, 2 July, 1883, p 5. People's Advocate claimed there were 4,950 on the register and 4,733 voted. The figure should be 4,753.

¹⁹¹ Belfast Newsletter, 3 July, 1883, p 4.

¹⁹² Northern Standard, 7 July, 1883, p 3, and People's Advocate, 7 July, 1883, p 2.

There was some consternation shown in the columns of the Northern Standard as to why such a large number of spoilt votes could have been cast by Conservative supporters. Another cause for concern within Tory ranks was that of 182 'outvoters' - men who had a vote within Monaghan but lived outside the county - only 80 actually voted.¹⁹³ There was no estimate of how many Catholic outvoters there were, nor what percentage of them voted, but it seems certain that the very vast majority of outvoters would have been Conservative supporters.

If the spoilt voters are added to the actual returns we are left with the following figures:

Healy	2,397
Munro	2,081
Pringle	276

An addition of 102 Conservative outvoters who failed to vote would give Munro 2,183 and deprive Healy of his overall majority. And whilst in actuality such an exercise is irrelevant to the result, it does help to explain where the lost Protestant vote went. The Belfast Newsletter claimed that there was a Protestant surfeit of 280 votes. When the total Conservative and Liberal vote is tallied it gives a combined vote of 2,281. If we assume that there were as many Protestant deaths, incarcerations in gaol and poorhouse, emigrations and other disfranchising factors as there were upon the Catholic side, then we are still left with the problem of the difference between the two votes (including spoilt votes) of 2,397 minus 2,357 which equals 40. This could be explained by the fact of 20 Protestants voting for Healy. We know, for example, that a few Protestants in Farney, namely George Remmick and Henry Overend supported Healy. There is also the suggestion that a few members of Farney True Blues LOL 509 had joined the Land League in 1881 and would presumably have voted for Healy.¹⁹⁴ This might explain the voting totals. However, it does not fully take into consideration the nature of Monaghan politics. We may assume that the 2,011 people who

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Livingston, Monaghan Story, p 339, makes this claim about the Farney lodge. He makes no suggestions as to Protestant support for Healy in 1883. Shirley papers indicate that the Farney True Blue lodge was made up almost entirely of Presbyterians from Corvally.

voted for Munro were Protestants. It is unlikely that any Catholic would have voted for a Tory; if they wanted an alternative to Healy that would be offered by Pringle. Similarly, a few Liberals may not have voted, but as there was always the claim that old style Presbyterian Liberals only numbered 300 then there must have been little abstention by Pringleites.

Another question which must be answered is to what extent the Catholics voted for Healy. One letter to the People's Advocate suggested that about 150 Catholics either voted for Munro or Pringle, or else abstained. Their number was balanced by Episcopalian and Presbyterian defections to the Nationalists. If this was the case, bearing in mind that Healy had a majority of 265 over Munro then there must have been 515 Protestants who voted for Healy. The correspondent, who titled himself 'A Protestant Farmer' had got his mathematics wrong; but if his assertion is true that 150 Catholics did not vote for Healy then if they abstained Healy would have required 415 Protestant¹⁹⁵ votes. If they voted for either Pringle or Munro then Healy would have required a greater defection from the Protestant ranks. It is considerably more likely that our earlier figures are accurate. That is, that when Pringle and Munro's votes are added together with the 102 Conservative out voters and the 76 spoilt votes for the two there is a discrepancy of 40 between the total and Healy's vote, and that this is explained by 20 Protestants switching sides. There was, after all, never any query as to whether the Catholic vote would go for Healy. The only uncertainty was as to how many Liberal Presbyterians would support Munro. As it turned out, virtually none of them took this course. The 1883 result in Monaghan further illuminated the sectarian nature of Ulster politics by this period.

¹⁹⁵ People's Advocate, 7 July, 1883, p 1. This suggestion is accepted by Walker in Parliamentary Representation, p 372. He points out that a letter in the Northern Standard agreed that some Protestants had voted for Healy. See Northern Standard, 7 July, 1883, p 3.

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

The nature of politics in Monaghan in the nineteenth century was strongly sectarian in character. In this it reflected confrontations found elsewhere in the northern province. In the opening chapter the genesis of the Protestant population of the county has been explored in detail. The creation of a Protestant, non-Irish landowning class in the seventeenth century was accompanied by the development of a substantial Protestant tenantry. The survival of these Protestants alongside the longer established, and numerically dominant Roman Catholic population sets the scene for our story.

It is not our intention to restate here the major conclusions as these have been elaborated in various chapters of the work. The chronicle of sectarian conflict improved little with retelling. It may be helpful, however, to recall the bare outlines of political representation in the county from the early to the late nineteenth century.

During the period 1800-65 the parliamentary representatives from Monaghan, be they Tories or Whigs, differed little in terms of their social origins or political attitudes. The most obvious differentiating feature was perhaps their respective attitudes towards Catholic issues and claims. William Warner Westenra and his son Henry were strong supporters of the emancipation of Catholics, and they were opposed by the Leslie of Glaslough. Later on the Westenra family moved away from the Whig identification, so that

by 1868 they were close to the county's Tories. The Dartreys, on the other hand, remained true to the Whig cause. But this meant that by the time of Gladstone's administrations they were becoming disenchanted with the Liberals. On the Conservative side stood the Leslies and the Shirleys. These steadfastly maintained their political affiliations right up to the end of the century.

Below the level of the class from which parliamentary representatives were drawn, lay the great bulk of the population, Catholic and Protestant. During the first half of the century the voters generally obeyed the instructions of their landlords. With the exception of the revolt of Farney in 1826, the tenants tended to vote with their landlords, and it may be noted, not normally out of fear of refusal. However, as the century progressed, the Catholic tenant farmers evolved a position whereby they would cast one vote for the Liberal candidate and one for their landlord's man. The Protestant tenantry was, for the most part, oriented towards the Conservatives and voted accordingly.

The reality of politics in Monaghan in the period up to 1865 was that one Tory would invariably be elected, while the second seat was sometimes captured by the Whigs. Tory domination was the norm. However, as the power of the Catholic clergy increased the Liberals found it expedient to pay some attention to the views of the Catholic bishop. The Whig magnates were keenly aware that their hopes of sharing in the representation of the county depended in part on courting the Catholic vote and gaining the tacit endorsement of the bishop. Bishop Donnelly also recognised this fact and so was able to exert pressure upon prospective Liberal candidates. He also recognised that a Catholic Liberal might not gain the support of the Presbyterian Liberal voters. Thus Donnelly pursued the realistic goal of securing for his people the best possible Protestant M.P.

The 1868 election, which opens the period of our study, exposed the weakness of a Liberal candidate who had no support from the Catholic clergy. William Gray, coming from a family background hardly calculated to instil Catholic confidence, received a predictably poor vote. The contest was the occasion of considerable

sectarian conflict (as was its 1865 predecessor) and resulted in one fatality.

The outcome of this Monaghan contest was virtually a foregone conclusion. What was significant about the 1868 election was the pattern of results beyond the county. Gladstone was swept into power, securing in rapid succession the passage of the Church Disestablishment Act and his first Land Act. A further reform was the passage of the Secret Ballot Act. All of these measures had repercussions within the county.

The period of the first Gladstonian administration also saw the rise in Ireland of the Home Government Association. This conservative Home Rule movement proved to be the harbinger of far reaching political change in the succeeding decade. In Monaghan in 1871 an intriguing contest was promised when John Madden of Hilton Park addressed the constituency on behalf of the new movement. Bishop Donnelly might have encouraged him enough to poll the county but for the intervention of Cardinal Cullen and Lord Thomas O'Hagan. Madden felt obliged to retire, giving his support to Butt who stood in his place. Butt failed to secure more than a small number of Protestant votes.

John Madden came forward once again in 1874, appealing from a Home Rule platform for Catholic and Protestant support. Again he was unable to secure public endorsement by Bishop Donnelly. As a result he was without clerical aid at the hustings, and in Farney the Home Rule vote collapsed, Catholics preferring to vote for Sewallis Shirley and Sir John Leslie.

While Madden had drawn votes from either side of the religious divide, this was on an insufficient scale to construct a successful electoral base. By 1880 he had retired from active politics. The challenge to Tory hegemony now emanated from a more traditional quarter - the Liberal party. The party's candidates in 1880 did not come from the landed classes as had hitherto been the case. They were from the professional ranks of society, both being solicitors. The small number of Presbyterian Liberals in Monaghan, who by this time held the key to electoral success, were intensively canvassed.

With the aid of this strategically placed group of voters the Liberals had a striking victory, returning both candidates.

Following success at the 1880 General Election Gladstone once more turned his attention to the troubled state of Ireland. His second administration introduced the 1881 Land Act which, while it did not meet all the Land League's demands, conferred substantial benefits on Irish tenant farmers. In Monaghan the Liberal party was successful in gaining control of much of the local government apparatus. It appeared as if Tory hegemony had been broken and that non-sectarian class politics had been established.

The final election in our period demonstrated just how illusory the 1880 victory had been. When one of the Liberal members resigned Charles Stewart Parnell recommended Tim Healy as the next M.P. for Monaghan. The Catholic voters were faced with the choice of joining with Presbyterians and supporting a Liberal substitute or following Parnell's advice. They chose the latter course and Healy was returned with a narrow overall majority; Healy received 2,397 votes, as against 2,081 votes for the Conservative Munro and a derisory 276 votes for the Liberal Pringle. The 1883 result in Monaghan underlined the inherent problems facing non-sectarian Liberal politics in the northern province. The anti-Tory alliance was only viable as long as one section of voters, Catholic Home Rulers, needed the support of another, that of Presbyterian Liberals. Once this interdependence was disturbed by changes in relative electoral strength the dissolution of the alliance was inevitable. The fleeting success of 1880 and its subsequent aftermath epitomised these difficulties. Thus ensued the less than strange death of Liberal Ulster. Henceforward Monaghan's electoral politics would be more openly sectarian with constitutionalist candidates, representing Protestant solidarity in the face of advancing Catholic nationalism, fighting a vain rearguard action. The banner had been raised 'in the remote north'.

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Much of this material has recently been deposited in the Public
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